MARCH 1995

AUSTRALIAN

PLAYBOY

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THE BABES OF MELROSE PLACE

HEATHER, LAURA & JOSIE

RATING THE HOPS
A PUNTERS GUIDE TO THE BEST BREWS

JEAN-CLAUDE VAN DAMME
THE NEW ACTION HERO: ALL BRAWN, NO BRAIN?

LOVE BYTES
GETTING IT OFF ON THE INTERNET

THE SENSATIONAL DONNA PERRY IN A SIZZLING PICTORIAL

SEALED SECTION

15 WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR SEX LIFE

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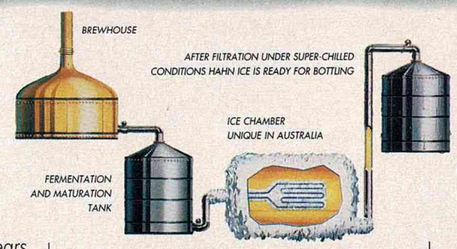
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AFTER FILTRATION UNDER SUPER-CHILLED CONDITIONS HAHN ICE IS READY FOR BOTTLING
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THE ICE AGE IS JUST BEGINNING.

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PLAYBOY

march 1995

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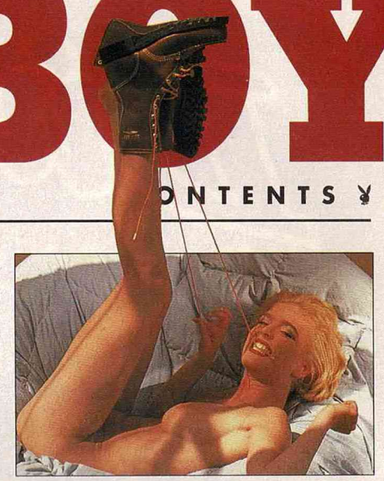

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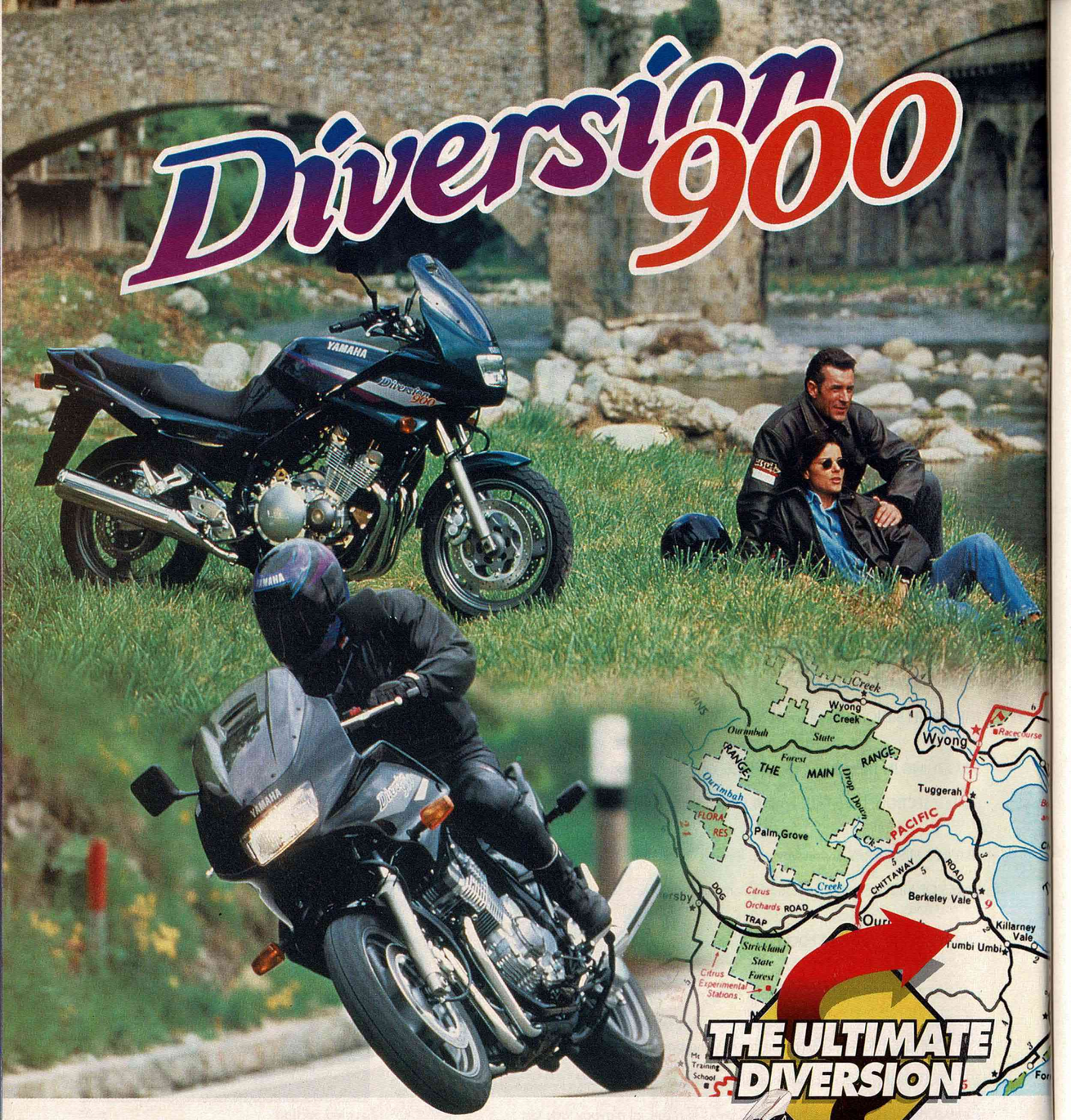
COVER STORY

Melrose Place is one of the hottest shows in the world – with more than its fair share of Australian followers. Josie Bissett – shot by Roberto Rocco for our cover – is one of the babes who makes us tune in every week. For a more revealing look, our pictorial – as well as a 20 Questions with Heather Locklear – starts on page 80.



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OVERPRICED POLITICIANS II

Politicians always say that, compared with the top business executives, they are hideously underpaid. Of course when they produce the figures to back this claim up they choose to exclude the hundreds of thousands of dollars in benefits, allowances and superannuation payments that they alone receive. Put them out in the business world where you live and die by how you perform, not on how well you sleaze and compromise, and most of them wouldn't be able to hold a real job.

It's time the two party system was abolished and the parliament was filled with people who were concerned about the country and its future. Under the two party system, by the time a politician gets elected he has compromised his integrity to such a degree, and owes so much to so many supporters that his purpose of representing the country becomes secondary, and the job is reduced to returning favours, providing jobs for the boys and trying to appeal to whatever pressure group is required at the time. National interest has sunk beneath the weight of the greed and corruption of our so-called leaders. And for this they get a retirement package that is more than the rest of us earn while we're working. Why would they care about how the country is running?

D.T.
Southport, Qld

It's probably not a surprise, but there were not a lot of readers who were on the side of the pollies. And suspiciously enough, the few that were had mostly ACT postmarks. One of those who complained, however, suggested that it's easy to attack politicians without understanding the workload they are subject to. Well, with revealing memoirs appearing from a number of formerly senior politicians, it's not only journalists asking questions about wages and benefits, but also the pollies themselves.

This one is from Senator John Button's recently released book, and describes the outcome of a fact finding trip to London that included four ministers and their staffs. Between trips to Phantom Of The Opera and meeting with royalty, they also had a few economic and trade discussions . . . "It's hard to assess the impact of these events. My guess is that not much happened as a result of it all . . . Not much was discussed or learnt about the outcomes of significant economic change in either country; certainly nothing that could not be read about in a good newspaper." His words, not ours – Ed.

DREAMING

As a cricket fan, I thank you for your interview with **Shane Warne** (December 1994). As an Englishman I can only sympathise with you when he is treated unmercifully by the English team as they reclaim the Ashes this summer. Spin bowlers are always successful at first, but become less effective as the batsmen work him out – and Warne will be no exception.

P.M.
Sydney, NSW

If the Poms are so strong, why are you guys using our players? – see Traitors, page 86 this issue – Ed.

FEEDBACK FEEDBACK

I really enjoyed the fiction supplement in your January issue, but I have a question to ask. Why, in Joe Haldeman's *Feedback* story, didn't the artist know his client had murder in mind when he got up out of the chair? Earlier in the story, if one of the two moved, the other one was forced to follow, and that's ignoring the fact that their thoughts and emotions were inextricably intertwined. Still, it was a great story.

P.A.
Greenacre, NSW

It's a pleasure to know our readers get so involved with the stories. Well spotted. – Ed.

TWICE AS NICE

Twins! Sensational! I don't know about anybody else, but I thought the Madison twins were great. How about an "All Twins" issue?

H.R.
Inverloch, Vic

We'll see what we can do. – Ed.

Write to us! Send your letters to Dear Playboy, PO Box 746, Darlinghurst 2010, and remember, we'll give preference to letters that say something.

Reading all these informative articles sure makes you dry in the mouth.

COOPER'S. AUSTRALIAN OWNED. AUSTRALIAN MADE.

SEX ADVISER

PRIMING THE PUMP

Recently, I have been seeing a man who emits seminal fluid almost immediately upon becoming aroused. He does that with little, if any, physical stimulation from me. I don't think it is premature ejaculation, because he ejaculates during intercourse. He says it is a form of lubrication; however, none of the other men I have ever been with have done that. I am curious to know how common it is.

– Miss D.W., WA

Relax. Emission of mucoid fluid upon arousal is perfectly normal in men, though it most often occurs during prolonged arousal. It is not premature ejaculation but a form of lubrication, as your lover explained – something to prime the pump.

GETTING SWEATY

A friend of mine who works out a lot claims that exercise increases sexual desire. Especially if you work out at a co-ed health club. Sounds like a lot of hype to me, but I'm curious. Has anyone done a study relating exercise to sex?

– F.A., Qld

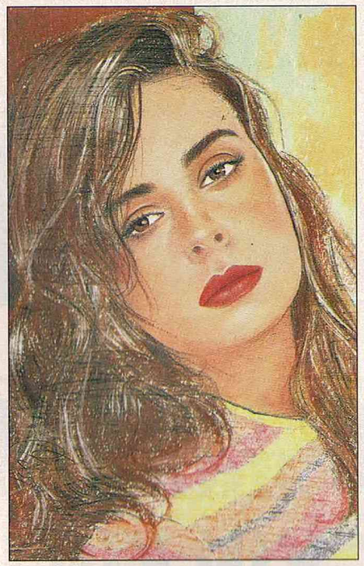
A study done at Indiana University in the US suggests that there is a relationship between exercise and sex – if you are willing to believe the person you're talking with, that is. Researchers interviewed students in classrooms and students walking into a field house. Not surprisingly, the people on their way into the field house reported that they had a median of 39 minutes of exercise a day (vs 21 minutes for classroom subjects). They also reported having more sex (7.58 times per month vs 4.18 times per month for the classroom crowd) and a greater desire for sex (they wanted to do it 13.98 times per month vs 7.60 times per month for the eggheads). It makes sense to us: the more you get in touch with your body, the more you want to see what the sucker is capable of. And then you're trapped in a vicious circle.

SIZING THINGS UP

For years, Playboy has been telling its readers that penis size doesn't matter. I'm willing to buy that, except for one thing. You never publish statistics to go along with your advice. What is the average size?

– F.C., SA

Averages are for the simple-minded. Here's a list of measurements of erect penises of white college men, in quarter-inch lengths. The Alfred C. Kinsey Institute for Sex Research reviewed the data and found that of the college males it measured, .2 per cent checked in at 9.5cm (3.75"), .3 per cent at 10.2cm (4"), .2 per cent at 10.8cm (4.25"), 1.7 per cent at 11.4cm (4.5"), .8 per cent at 12.1cm (4.75"), 4.2 per cent at 12.7cm (5"), 4.4 per cent at 13.3cm (5.25"), 10.7 per cent at 14cm (5.5"), 8 per cent at 14.6cm (5.75"), 23.9 per cent at 15.2cm (6"), 8.8 per cent at 15.9cm (6.25"), 14.3 per cent at 16.5 (6.5"), 5.7 per cent at 17.1cm (6.75"), 9.5 per cent at 17.8cm (7"), 1.8 per cent at 18.4cm (7.25"), 2.9



per cent at 19cm (7.5"), 1 per cent at 19.7cm (7.75"), 1 per cent at 20.3cm (8"), .3 per cent at 20.9cm (8.25"), .3 per cent at 21.6cm (8.5"), .1 per cent at 22.2cm (8.75") and .1 per cent at 22.7cm (9"). And if you aren't satisfied, at least it sounds better in metric measures than it does in imperial!

CUTBACKS

Four years ago, I had a vasectomy. Since that time, I have married; now, for the first time in my life, I want to have children. I understand that some vasectomies can be reversed. What are the odds?

– J.M., Qld

Before you attempt a reversal, you should visit a doctor and determine whether or not you have developed sperm antibodies. (When a vasectomy is performed, the sperm cells remain in the body. In some cases, the natural immunity system treats the sperm cells as foreign bodies and develops defences against them.) Sperm antibodies provide a reliable indicator of future fertility status. According to a report by the Association for Voluntary Sterilisation, "Following reversal surgery 13 men showed no evidence of sperm antibody in their semen, 11 of 13 wives became pregnant. Following reversal surgery in seven men whose semen showed the presence of such antibodies, only one wife of the seven became pregnant." Those are the odds. If you go against them, you could win.

CUT ME QUICK

Not long ago, I brought a new lover home for a weekend of sexual delights beyond my wildest expectations. So much for the good news. The morning after she left, as I was brushing my teeth, I noticed a cut, or sore, on the underside of my tongue (on the tiny vertical fold of skin that attached the tongue to the mouth). I'm afraid to go to the doctor. Is it herpes or some other dread venereal disease?

–W.L., Tas

Bit your tongue. It's not a case of the dreaded Tyrolean waffle stomp or of the black rose of Calcutta. It's something better. Not long ago, a *Playboy* reader (who happens to be a dental student) sent us a copy of an article published in *The Journal Of The American Dental Association* titled "Lingual Frenum Ulcer Resulting from Orogenital Sex". Don't you wish you got our mail? It seems that in the heat of passion, a man sometimes extends his tongue in such a fashion that said tongue is lacerated by the mandibular incisors. (Down, Fang.) The first cut is the deepest – the phenomenon you noticed is mechanical, not infectious (like catching yourself in your zipper). The wound should heal within seven to 10 days. Of course, long before then, you should invite the woman back, show her the damage and invite her sympathy. It's not the same as a Prussian duelling scar, but in this day and age, it comes close.

Please address your letters requesting advice or giving accounts of sexual experiences to Sex Adviser c/- Australian Playboy, PO Box 746, Darlinghurst 2010. We welcome enquiries but are unable to reply to each reader individually.

THEY DRINK TOM COBB
AT THE KIN KIN HOTEL'

TOM COBB - THE GREAT AUSTRALIAN SPIRIT

FORUM

I am so lonely I could die. I wake up in the morning, realise I don't have a boyfriend and put my head in the oven. I go to the supermarket, fill my cart with Lean Cuisine entrées for one, am too demoralised to let the cashier see the pathetic contents of my cart, so I slink away. I go to parties, night classes, museums, various clubs and mixers with my eyelashes curled hopefully, am racked with disappointment to find only more hopeful women with curled eyelashes. I go to dinner parties, my throat seizes up with envy watching the happy couples who are my friends. My nights are long with longing.

Also I have a very large bridge in New York to sell you. Ho ho ho.

I am so goddamned sick of the myth and stereotype of the unattached woman. Like none of us have anything better to do than pine away. Right now I have to go feed and play with a 15-year-old dog named Mabel, whose human has been in the hospital for months. Mabel, with her streaming eyes and her stiff careful walk, used to be the life and soul of the country, travelling miles each day to romp with friends at designated farms. But now she's stuck in a little apartment in town, staring into space, waiting, solo.

Solo – the new word of the moment. I pick up *TV Guide* or *People* and my eye doesn't have to stray more than a millimetre to read this dread word. Some young starlet is again solo and whimpering wistfully about why she can never get it right (because you're a wimp with cotton candy expectations, airhead). Some older starlet, bravely facing down an alcoholic, abusive marriage, is grimly but hopefully solo (tell it to Betty Ford, doll).

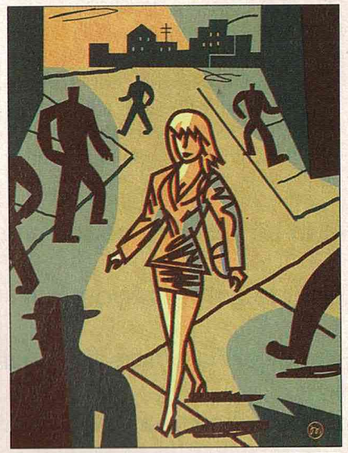
"Solo" is even worse than its predecessor, "single". Single means sweaty, tawdry, reeking with halitosis, on the make. Solo is doom, gloom, anxiety and alienation.

And so far, in all my perusals of tabloid journalism, I have never once seen the word solo applied to a man. I am sure you are shocked by this. No, I'm not neither.

I do not blame men for this. I blame a warped society that needs to have women in thrall to men to keep its precarious *status quo*. We are hierarchical, we need a servant class. Women keep the wheels greased and the beds made.

Solo is a scare tactic. It virtually shouts to women, "Be afraid! Be very afraid! You must be part of a couple or you'll be miserable. You must stop this independence nonsense and eccentricity. Join the gang. Don't make trouble. Quick, throw on some high heels and a G-string before you're too old and are solo forever!"

This is not to say there wasn't a brief period in my life – maybe from 1978 to 1983 – when I was a jangled, grovelling, beseeching, desperate little lump of a girl with big needs. Big needs. My whole life paled before the fact that I didn't have a guy. There was no taste in my mouth, no reflection in my mirror. Having a boyfriend would make me whole, I thought.



SOLO CONTENDERE

Hell, having a boyfriend would make me exist. This is what propaganda ingrained since birth will do to the tender female psyche. I am sick to death of the propaganda and of the word solo.

I have just returned from visiting Mabel. She's perking up. She no longer walks to the gate: she sees that it's closed, walks away four steps, forgets that the gate is closed, walks back, sees that it's closed, turns around, forgets, turns, forgets. Maybe it's all the cuddles I'm giving her, or maybe it's the Prozac.

"Aren't we just the nicest?" I said to my friend Lynn Ann, who's sharing Mabel duties.

"Somebody has to do it," she said. And she's right. You can't let a sweet old girl like Mabel pace frantically in a kennel. She has devoted her life to being devoted. What I've done with my life, since I got over my own self-imposed frantic pacing and waiting for the thunderbolt of romance, is to open it up. Love my friends, rescue old dogs. I'll never match Mabel for devotion, but still.

Lynn Ann went with me to the dentist yesterday, held my hand and joked around while he pulled out a tooth that was impacted up to my nose. This, I figure, is the point of life – to have friends like Lynn Ann. Or Ed, or Eileen, Steven, Merrill, Maggie. I have an embarrassment of riches. When the phone rings and it's Lynn Ann, I'm happy.

Being solo means if the phone rings and it's not a guy, then whoever it is is of diminished importance. Being solo means that your friends, all the people who give form and function to your life, are just a way station until that perfect mate comes along.

You know those people who disappear whenever they meet a new prospect? How we resent them for making us feel disposable and devalued? Those people also give me the heebie-jeebies – they emit this scary, metallic vibe of isolation. Pacing and frantic. They live in a tiny kennel in their heads. Even during their disappearing act when they think they've met somebody, they're still alone, because the potential mate is too symbolic. A mate means security, status. A mate is a commodity.

Mabel's human called me yesterday, a very depressed hospital patient.

"Before I went into the hospital I thought everything was okay," she said. "But now I feel so totally alone. Nobody visits me. The fact that I'm in the hospital makes absolutely no difference in anyone's life. Nobody's upset or inconvenienced. Not that I want anyone upset or inconvenienced, but you know what I mean. I want to be loved and needed."

"People love you. You're just depressed because you've been in the hospital so long," I said. But my heart went out to her.

No human (or dog) is an island. We need each other desperately, we need to be needed desperately. But to listen to the propaganda, to pin all our hopes and needs on husbands and wives and nuclear families, is self-defeating.

To find love, give up searching. Just look right in front of you.

– CYNTHIA HEIMEL

HEALTH & FITNESS

Straighten up for a better life, says Matt Johnson

Gravity, given the opportunity, would like to suck your brain out the end of your toes. And while for some of us that would constitute no great loss, gravity isn't particularly selective – it picks on everyone and everything – and wouldn't mind dragging your skull, spine and just about everything else that exists above your ankles down to ground level as well.

From the moment you took your first step, gravity has spent the better part of your life trying to turn you into a large, flat greasy spot – and to some extent it has succeeded.

•

Your mother always told you to sit up straight, but then she also told you that eating the crusts would make your hair curly, that if you picked your nose your finger would get stuck, and that if you were nice to people then they would be nice back. Most of us worked out pretty early that Mum lived in another world to ourselves, and that it was fairly safe to take her advice, even in regard to posture, with a grain of salt (some of us later added lime and tequila).

Want to be six centimetres taller?

Want to get rid of your gut?

The answer has more to do with posture than you may think.

Unfortunately, about sitting up straight at least, she had a point. If you're not so sure, then you're probably going to be surprised when you catch a look at yourself in a full length mirror one day. Not a get ready, deep breath, spare tyre in, chest out look in the mirror, but an unexpected "Hey, who's that? It's me" look when you're in your natural, normal form. Chances are, that spring-stepped, taut and trim teen you used to know may well have assumed the stature and consistency of a ripe pear. And even if you exercise regularly, it doesn't mean you're éxempt – even elite athletes suffer from poor posture and, in fact, may have posture problems through their chosen sport.

Some medical experts described poor posture as one of the three most common diseases in the world (tooth decay and a parasitic infection called bilharzia are generally accepted as the other top two). And when you look at the list of symptoms attributed to poor posture, it's difficult to think of someone who hasn't complained of at least a couple: headaches, lower back pain, lethargy, knee trouble, bowel problems, tension and stress.

Unfortunately, most of the symptoms and effects of a deteriorating posture are generally accepted by ourselves and the medical profession as simply the inescapable consequences of getting old.

That posture-related conditions have received so little attention from most of the medical community has, the more cynical suggest, a lot to do with the fact that there is no drug that can be prescribed to improve the way you stand – basically nobody can make any money from it. It's an argument that's lent some credence when you think how little you heard about osteoporosis before the milk companies started using it as a sales tool?

But the threat of an imperceivably slow and somewhat indistinct deterioration of your health never worked when it came from your mother, and it's unlikely to work for us either, so it's important to realise there are a few more glamorous benefits to improving your posture. Did you know that simply improving the way you stand can make you up to six centimetres taller? You probably didn't realise that studies have shown that posture is one of the first three things people notice about you (hair and eyes are, somewhat unfortunately, the other two), and that people perceive others who slouch and sag as lacking power and self-respect.

Last but not least, that inexorably expanding bulge between your chest and hips may have less to do with an excessive celebration of life's riches, and a lot to do with an increased curve in your lower spine – stand up straight and lose the gut. Strange but true.

Almost all postural problems are related to our spine. Posture wouldn't be a problem if our spine was rigid and fixed immovably to our skull and pelvis. Getting around would be a hell of a problem, however, and looking over your shoulder to see who's behind you would mean walking in a circle, but on the bright side, you couldn't feel guilty about not going for a jog: a rigid spine wouldn't cushion the impact of each step and a quick trip around the block would probably leave you with a headache that would last a couple of days.

Our spine is a compromise between stability and flexibility, it has to allow a nearly unlimited range of motion while at the same time supporting the entire weight of the head and body. If you believe that God created Man, then looking at the design of the spine is a pretty sure sign that he never intended us to have too good a time. Those of a less religious bent explain the spine's inadequacies by theorising that it hasn't dealt especially well with the transition from wandering around on four legs, to prancing about on just two. In reality, it's not so much the chasing woolly mammoths across the primeval plains that caused the problems, but from sitting around the fire and bragging about it afterwards.

Most of us spend far more time sitting than we do standing and it's how we sit that's to blame. As we've already alluded to, the bony structure of the spine is essentially unstable and it needs the support of the muscles and ligaments to allow it to work. Most people think of muscles as simply being relaxed until they are called into use. In fact, muscles are constantly in a state of contraction (called tone). Changes of tone can alter and unbalance the support the muscles give your spine.

What alters tone? Standing or, more often, sitting incorrectly. For every two centimetres the head moves forward, seven to eight kilograms of force has to be supported by the muscles of the neck and back. Subject these muscles to this extra work over an extended period of time and their tone will increase.

Moving down the body a little, a weakness or lack of tone of the stomach muscles (usually through inactivity) and too much tone in the back muscles forces the pelvis to tilt forward. This forces a curve into the lower back and presses the contents of the abdomen against the stomach wall. The increased curve of the spine can compress the discs and nerve roots and it's unlikely to be pleasant.

The effects of poor posture are not always slow and insignificant either. An unbalance of the muscles of the back can mean that, one day, bending over to pick up your wallet, or even just a sneeze can be enough to tip the scales and cause a painful injury.

As insidious and annoying as poor posture is, the bright side is that it doesn't take a lot of work to improve it – just a little effort and a lot of patience. A few regular exercises to maintain the strength of the abdominal muscles can do an amazing job of reducing or avoiding lower back pain, and if you are stuck at a desk, ensure it is set up correctly. If you have to stare at a computer screen all day, make sure it's directly in front of your eyes. Your feet should be flat on the floor, your hips and knees bent at 90 degrees and the height of the desk adjusted so your forearms rest comfortably on it. Taking some of the weight of your arms on your forearms is essential as it reduces the stress on the neck and shoulders, but don't brace your arms against the arms of your chair or the desk – you'll just transfer the force to the wrists and start a whole new set of problems.

Especially important is to move occasionally (at least every hour) – not allowing the muscles to tense up through lack of movement (see "Desk Aerobics").

DESK AEROBICS:

Move slowly from position to position and hold each stretch for 3-5 sec.

Tip your head from side to side, as if you're trying to touch your ear on your shoulder.

Keeping your head erect, turn it from side to side, looking over each shoulder in turn.

Tuck your chin down onto your chest, then move your head until you're looking at the ceiling.

Trace small circles with your shoulders – both directions.

Sit upright and try to touch your shoulder blades together.

RAW DATA

SIGNIFICA, INSIGNIFICA, STATS AND FACTS

10 YEARS AGO . . .

March 1985 and it was the time for *Playboy*'s great campus poll: a survey of males 17 to 25 at universities across Aus-tralia. Ten years is a long time, but some of the answers seem to belong more to the last century rather than the last decade. Ten years before his "did-too, did-not" memoirs, Bob Hawke topped the poll as the most admired Australian, Sir Joh (!) came in fourth, two ahead of Mike Willesee and Rupert Murdoch. And apart from getting Rachel Ward to cook him breakfast, what was it about Bryan Brown that saw him voted into eighth. Maybe Rachel was enough.

At least one-third of those we questioned should be thankful their predictions of the future weren't too accurate – the 35 per cent who said Australia would be under a direct military threat by 1995. And those who want to include the Gulf War will have to explain why none of them nominated the Middle East as the source of conflict. Considering these people are now in positions of responsibility and control – it sort of explains a lot, doesn't it?

Our story on "goanna pulling" had nothing to do with the sexual habits of a large native lizard, but it had a lot to do with two blokes assuming the push-up position head to head and having a looped strap of leather positioned behind their raised heads. Whoever pulled the other guy across the line won. Watch out for it as a cultural demonstration sport in Sydney 2000 . . . To more pleasant topics: Cherie Witter looks as good now as she did 10 years ago.

RETREAD RETHREADS

Cost of a new pair of Levi's jeans in the USA: $50. Typical cost outside the USA: $125. Typical price outside the USA of a pair of pre-1983 Levi's (those cut from a single piece of denim): $99. Cost in Japan of a pair of vintage '50s or '60s-era Big E Levi's: $700 to $4200.

EYING THE BOYS

Results from a US study that asked personal trainers who spent more time perving on whom came up with results that probably say more about the type of people who hire personal trainers than the population in general.

Of their male and female clients, who spent more time looking at the opposite sex? 77 per cent of the trainers answered women. On who spent more time looking in the mirror, 91 per cent respond: men.

COLD HARD FACTS

From the US, land of plastic, we find that the number of Visa cards in circulation there is 150 million; Master Card: 115 million; American Express cards: 25 million. Number of businesses in the US that accept Visa and MasterCard: 12 million. Number that accept American Express: 4 million.

FACT OF THE MONTH

According to an American Consumer Product Safety Commission, 1455 people went to hospital in 1992 with injuries from playing ping-pong.

JUST DO IT

Major reasons why we don't take part in recreational sports:*

Don't have time: 56%
Too expensive: 43%
Not interested: 40%
Concerned with crime: 33%
Have health limitations: 31%

*respondents could choose more than one

Source: *USA Today*

PB22371-A CSB0170/D

IN 1986 THEY INTRODUCED A DRAFT WHICH NO HEALTHY NORMAL YOUNG AMERICAN HAS EVER TRIED TO DODGE MILLER GENUINE DRAFT

Miller

Movies by Russell Edwards

MILK MONEY
Directed by Richard Benjamin

Harris and Griffith: An unlikely match

Still believe in the working girl with a heart of gold? This cutesy comedy called *Milk Money* is for suckers like you. A trio of 12-year-olds try raiding milk money and other get-rich-quick schemes to hire a prostitute named V (**Melanie Griffith**) for their school sex education project. Okay.

Enamoured by her beauty, one boy (**Michael Patrick Carter**) decides to fix her up with his widowed father (**Ed Harris**). On the lam from her pimp (**Malcolm McDowell**), she agrees to trek out to the burbs. Maybe.

Believing her to be a maths tutor, dad falls in love. V does likewise, suggesting the distinct possibility that they, pimp notwithstanding, may all live happily ever after. Hmm! I don't think so.

Beginning as an effective satire on adolescent sexuality, this movie provides some good natured giggles about discovering the opposite sex. However, by the time the guns come out and the car chases start happening *Milk Money*'s premise has stretched beyond goodwill and turns sour.

All the kids give great performances and the superb Ed Harris makes the best of his simple-minded role. But as the long legged, big-busted school project, Ms Griffith is just like . . . well, Melanie Griffith. If her six foot Shirley Temple is merely an act, it should've been junked years ago. The bod's great, Melanie, but your voice is more annoying than ever. ¥¥

THE BROWNING VERSION
Directed by Mike Figgis

Now here's a novelty! A movie set in an exclusive English school without an embryonic queen or a KGB agent in sight. Mike Figgis's remake of the 1951 classic features the ever watchable **Albert Finney** (*Miller's Crossing* , *The Dresser*) as a professor of the classics being corralled into retirement. Playing the grumpy old bugger to the hilt, Finney gives a sympathetic portrayal of a man who has never lost his love for Latin.

The love he *has* lost is his wife's. Returning to her familiar role as the bonkable object of desire **Greta Scacchi** spends her screen time making either bitchy remarks at her hubby, or eyes at American exchange teacher **Matthew Modine**.

Giving this earnest movie some heart is a young boy (**Ben Silverstone**) who, despite the prof's humiliating teaching techniques, has acquired a taste for the classics and gives a translation by Robert Browning of the Agamemnon as a parting gift for his cantankerous instructor. (Go to the back of the class all those who thought the title referred to the name of the director!)

Excellent performances cannot save this terribly, terribly English movie from getting bogged in less than novel lamentations about keeping a stiff upper lip. ¥¥

A BRONX TALE
Directed by Robert De Niro

It's a tough gig for an actor to climb into the driver's seat and direct a movie. However, rather than taking the easy option of recreating mentor **Marty Scorsese**'s *Mean Streets,* Bobby instead uses his own New York backgound to tell *A Bronx Tale*.

This urban fable, set in the '60s, centres on a boy who, having witnessed a mafia hit, is rewarded by glamorous gangster Sonny (played by **Chazz Palminteri** who also wrote the one-man play on which the film is based) for maintaining his silence. Sonny becomes a surrogate father for the boy, much to the chagrin of the boy's real father, an honest bus driver (played by De Niro).

With the boy's soul hanging in the balance, *A Bronx Tale* plays out like a metropolitan replay of the battles of good and evil outlined in ancient mythology. The turf has been covered before, but the great soundtrack featuring Dino, Ol' Blue-eyes and doo-wop classics elevates this coming-of-age pic a notch above its predecessors. ¥¥¥

MOVIE SCORECARD

Pulp Fiction Quentin Tarantino's multi-levelled thriller with street cred. ¥¥¥¥¥

Quiz Show Robert Redford's movie about American gameshows asks interesting questions about television. ¥¥¥¥¥

Interview With The Vampire Christian Slater goes (Tom) Cruisin' for an oozin' when he scores a one-on-one with pointy-toothed Brad Pitt. ¥¥

Love Affair Warren & Annette live out a movie fantasy by remaking Cary & Deborah's *An Affair To Remember.* ¥¥

Only You Marisa Tomei & Robert Downey Jr have more difficulty than Beatty & Bening playing around with *Roman Holiday.* ¥¥

Airheads If you're comfortable with Motorhead's Lemme in *Dog Day Afternoon* you'll enjoy this heavy metal comedy caper. ¥¥¥¥

Trapped In Paradise Nic Cage and Jon Lovitz trapped in a very unseasonable yuletide comedy about bank robbers. ¥¥¥

Mrs Parker And The Vicious Circle Jennifer Jason Leigh has the time of her life playing dress-ups and pretending to be wicked humorist Dorothy Parker. ¥¥¥

Keaton and Davis: Chemistry, anyone?

SPEECHLESS
Directed by Ron Underwood

A lot of the charm of *Speechless* devolves from the fact that, while the plot seems highly unlikely, life imitated art some two years after the screenplay was written. In the movie we are merely asked to believe that a couple of speechwriters on opposing sides of a relatively minor state campaign discover they have the hots for each other before they actually find out they belong to rival camps. During the 1992 presidential election campaign, the rival Republican and Democrat press secretaries actually met and fell in love in real life, despite all the circumstances, which led to the erroneous conclusion that the film was based on their experiences!

MIchael Keaton plays the Republican as the more cynical of the two, an ex-TV sitcom hack with a genius for the soundbite. **Geena Davis** is far more idealistic in her approach, a committed Democrat who will eventually be encouraged by Keaton to consider running for office herself. Both are insomniacs who meet one hot sleepless night and experience instant lust before they have any idea who the other is. Ironically it is their shared but conflicting interests, which cause the lust to blossom into a feeling they can't live without each other.

Speechless is often very funny, as one might have expected from director **Ron** (*City Slickers*) **Underwood**'s deft handling of comedy. It's also very romantic, given its subject matter. But the political plotting is terribly confusing and unconvincing as the campaign reaches the dirty tricks stage, and there is a big question over Keaton and Davis's sexual chemistry. Both are consummate, versatile actors, and Davis in particular is very sensuous with her big, ugly-beautiful, crooked mouth, but I have the suspicion this disguises the lack of real spark. ¥¥¥

Video by Monique Pasilow

INCIDENT AT ROSWELL
Directed by Jeremy Kagan

A film about the alleged hush-up surrounding the discovery of a spaceship in the small US town of Roswell. The story is effectively told by a series of flashbacks beginning in 1993 at an army reunion. Major Jesse Marcel (**Kyle MacLachlan**) starts to piece together information from ex-officers about the events of 1947 when a local rancher (played by country music star **Dwight Yoakam**) found his property littered with silver debris. The cops assumed it belonged to the nearby army base and a youthful Marcel was sent to investigate.

The silver material was obviously not of this world and rumours involving little green men spread far and wide. All of a sudden a gag was put on anyone involved with the incident, the wreckage officially called a weather balloon and Marcel was left looking like the village idiot. Back in '93 and nearing death's door, he's determined to dig up the truth. A slow, haven't-I-seen-this-before? movie that only managed to keep me involved because I wanted to check out the aliens! ¥¥

WHEN A MAN LOVES A WOMAN
Directed by Luis Mandoki

Meg Ryan, Queen of the Big-Kiss-Finale (yes, she does it again!), plays a cute, fun wife and mother bouncing around her huge, bright house, full of wonderful furniture. But her perfect exterior hides a dark secret – she's an alcoholic. **Andy Garcia** is her impossibly perfect husband, a Mills & Boon fantasy character oblivious to his wife's problem. Which is not surprising considering Ryan's a hopeless drunk! By that I mean she's hopelessly miscast.

How could this perpetually clean, shiny-haired, bright-eyed woman, who looks like she just stepped out of a Country Road catalogue, have any failings? Rather than a falling-down drunk, she looks like a sleepy kitten or newborn foal unsure of its legs. Someone gutsier and less innocent (**Ellen Barkin**, maybe?) would have made you feel the real despair and hopelessness of an alcoholic. Ryan evokes no sympathy at all. And when she does get off the drink she's a pain in the arse anyway!

This film is boring – and even the strong lead characters can't save it. In short, it's an unrealistic hour and a half of plotless psychobabble with a soppy ending – it'd drive a dead dog to drink. ¥¥

PAST TENSE
Directed by Graeme Clifford

Warning! This video requires your undivided attention. You have sixty seconds to take the phone off the book and empty your bladder before the movie starts. Seriously, folks, this thriller has so many twists and turns, after the first 30 minutes you won't know whether you're Arthur or Martha! But hang in there – your patience will be rewarded.

Sexy Tori (**Lara Flynn Boyle**) moves in across the street from manly cop Gene (**Scott Glenn**). Within two minutes they're doing a horizontal folk-dance, even though she's so obviously weird she may as well have "Sicko" tattooed across her forehead! Later that night, at Tori's invitation, Gene pops over. Tori's already in bed but, unfortunately for Gene, she's not up to anything too strenuous because she's been stabbed to death.

The cops come and Gene's partner Larry (**Anthony LaPaglia**) takes charge of the case. Next thing you know, Tori's on the phone to Gene! Totally spooked he starts an investigation of his own which eventually leads him to a hospital where he finds himself staring down at a guy in intensive care. It's himself! Believe me, everything starts to make sense at this point – stick with it, you'll be glad you did. ¥¥¥

SPEED
Directed by Jan DeBont

Speed: Jack and the Action Flick Chick!

Hurrah! **Keanu Reeves** has finally found his movie niche – the action flick. Rather than his usual impersonation of a hollow log (remember *Dracula*!), Keanu gets to flex some muscle as Jack, an LA cop whose unit specialises in hostage/terrorist-type situations. He and sidekick Harry (**Jeff Daniels**) lock horns with a fruit loop (**Dennis Hopper**) who happens to be a walking encyclopaedia of bombs.

The explosives nut has rigged a bus full of innocent commuters to blow if it goes below 50mph for the less than lofty purpose of money – $3 million worth to be exact. It's Keanu's job to stop that happening by way of some great, jaw-dropping stunts. And just to be politically correct he's given a hand by Hollywood's favourite action flick chick, **Sandra Bullock** – she plays a cool uni student who plants the foot and keeps the bus over 50. Relentless thrills and spills make *Speed* the best action film since *Terminator 2.* Keanu's Jack has more balls than a Lotto commercial and – if I may pinch a phrase from the master blaster himself – you can bet your bippy *he'll be back.* ¥¥¥¥¥

VIDEO HIT-LIST

Manhattan Murder Mystery It's amateur sleuth time as Diane Keaton and Alan Alda suspect a neighbour of murder. Woody Allen, babbling hyperactively as usual, helps (or is that hinders!). This enjoyable flick is one of Woody's most accessible. ¥¥¥¥

Babewatch An unpreviewed spoof of *Baywatch* which is probably very funny . . . For the first minute! But who cares when there's tons of T & A – isn't that right, guys?

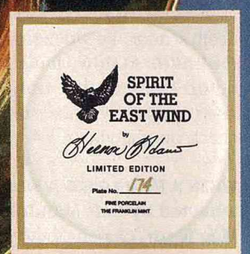
The Philadelphia Experiment 2 More time-travelling with the US Army. Cross the films *Terminator* and *1984* and you'd be on the right track. Not a patch on *TPE 1* but not a total loss. ¥¥¥

The Lover A rich Chinese bloke bonks (and bonks, and bonks . . .) a gorgeous 15-year-old sexpot played by young British model Jane March. ¥¥

The Client A Mafia lawyer commits suicide – but not before spilling his guts to an 11-year-old. Now the mob wants the kid to keep schtum and the FBI don't. Susan Sarandon puts in a convincing performance as junior's gutsy attorney. ¥¥¥¥

My Father, The Hero Cute, pouty lipped teen pretends her dad (Gerard "The Schnoz" Depardieu) is her boyfriend in order to impress a hunky guy. Can't see the point really – she's such a stunner that in the real world, Boy #2 would've been head-over-penis in lust within 10 seconds! ¥¥¥

Spirit of the Great Eagle



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The Western Heritage Museum presents a magnificent heirloom collector plate by award-winning artist Hermon Adams.

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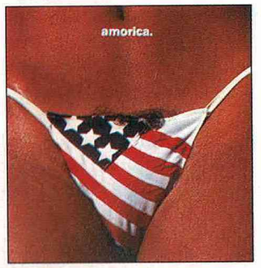
EXCLUSIVELY FROM FRANKLIN MINT

Music by Chuck Smeeton

Sting *Fields Of Gold: The Best Of 1984-1994* (A&M / Polydor) It's very easy to think of Sting as a political activist more than a musician these days, yet this collection hammers home the point that this boy really is good. Albums like *The Dream Of The Blue Turtles, Ten Summoner's Tales* and . . . *Nothing Like The Sun* have brought forth some great tracks, although it is the kind of music that doesn't command instant recall. For example, can you remember huge success for songs like *All This Time* or *Fragile*? Okay, so tracks like *Russians, Englishman In New York* and *If You Love Somebody Set Them Free* were hits, but what this collection really showcases is the near misses. Sting's lyrics have always been fascinating, and while he's not the hit-machine he was back in **Police** days, this "best of" does present the true artist. ¥¥¥¥

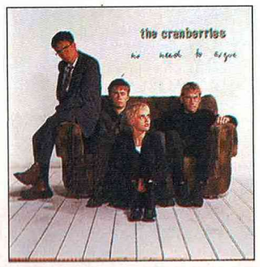
The Wonder Stuff *If The Beatles Had Read Hunter* . . . (Polydor)
In Britain, The Wonder Stuff have been a big favourite over the years, yet the vast majority of Australians only know them for their novelty hit *Dizzy* with **Vic Reeves** and, perhaps, their lively *Size Of A Cow.* So a trip back over the years in this "best of" collection reveals a great deal. First off, The Wonder Stuff are a great pop band, with an ability to churn out catchy tunes with great lyrics. Singer **Miles Hunt** and fellow bandleader **Malcolm Treece** are an excellent team, and this collection of tracks shows not only their ability but the potential that lay within the group – making the fact that the band is no more very disappointing. Perhaps the only hope is that they will be able to produce the same sort of material in a new guise, but until then *If The Beatles Had Read Hunter* . . . remains a nice little tombstone for The Wonder Stuff. ¥¥¥



The Black Crowes *Amorica* (American /BMG) The Black Crowes have been developing a serious cult following over the past couple of years, and rightly so, with a power-packed and aggressive heavy rock/blues sound. *Amorica* continues the theme, but does add a bit more variety with even some funky tracks like *P.25 London.* As always, **Chris Robinson**'s singing appears a reflection of a man who lives the sort of lifestyle he sings about, and the musicianship is excellent. **Eddie Harsch** on keyboards is brilliant, as is the interesting appearance from **Bruce Kaplan** and his pedal-steel guitar on *Wiser Time.* The whole album is very good, yet this is a band that does end up sounding a lot like a whole bunch of other bands without anything to really separate them from the pack. ¥¥¥

Jimmy Page & Robert Plant *No Quarter: Jimmy Page & Robert Plant Unledded* (Fontana /PolyGram)
What can you say? This is kind of like a Led Zep album . . . but it isn't. The sound of Robert Plant's vocals and Jimmy Page's guitar certainly bring back the memories, yet the songs don't – or at least all sound just a bit different from what you think they should. The whole album is not MTV-inspired, but the result of a visit to Marrakech and the added spice of some "world music" sounds from a collection of multi-cultural musicians. Mind you, only four of the tracks are new. The rest are old Zep classics performed in a new and interesting way. From the opening *Nobody's Fault But Mine* to an amazing version of *Kashmir* with a cast of thousands at the end, this is a pretty damn good collection with enough to satisfy those who wanted it to be Led Zep reborn as well as those who just wanted something new and interesting. ¥¥¥¥

HIT LIST
Toad The Wet Sprocket *Dulcinea* (Columbia) For a band with so much to offer, the long awaited Dulcinea is a little too "down" to elicit much joy. ¥¥
Jeff Buckley *Grace* (Sony) Tim's boy sounds like he listened to a lot of Led Zep as a kiddie – and learnt his trade well. ¥¥¥
The Eagles *Hell Freezes Over* (Geffen) Another bunch of old boys have a reunion but this one actually works . . . if you ever did like The Eagles. ¥¥¥
Jamiroquai *The Return Of The Space Cowboy* (Sony) Very similar to the funk of *Emergency On Planet Earth*, so if you like that . . . ¥¥
Barry White *The Icon Is Love* (A&M /Polydor) The king of the bedroom ballad – and master snake charmer on *The Simpsons* – is back, and it's good! ¥¥¥¥
Various Artists *Pulp Fiction Soundtrack* (MCA) Weird but interesting and entertaining mix of tracks from the hottest movie in town. ¥¥¥



The Cranberries *No Need To Argue* (Island /Phonogram) Another brilliant Irish band? You better believe it! *No Need To Argue* is the second album from this Limerick-based foursome, and they sound like a band who've only just started to explore endless possibilities. The key to the group is **Delores O'Riordan**, whose voice is the most dominant sound they produce. The Irish lilt, **Björk**-like vocal acrobatics so powerful she hardly needs a mike – she's got it all. Sometimes it's a bit "breathy" but the rest is so good you're prepared to allow this minor irritation. The band, too, are strong, with guitarist **Noel Hogan** the perfect complement to O'Riordan. The songs? From the hauntingly beautiful *Ode To My Family* to the grungy *Zombie* – which has received a fair bit of radio airplay – this album could almost be categorised as modern folk . . . and if that turns you off, it's your loss. ¥¥¥¥

INTERVIEW

jean-claude van damme

A candid conversation with Hollywood's hottest action star about brains versus brawn, infidelity versus romance and kicking his way onto the big screen.

It was like a scene from a movie: two private jets await side by side on the tarmac. Two identical black limousines pull up within minutes of each other. Each one parks by a different plane. A tall, muscular man with a ponytail, wearing a red-and-black leather jacket, gets out of one limo, while a shorter, equally muscular man in a colourful silk shirt gets out of the other. But these men have more in common than private planes and limos: they are two of Hollywood's biggest names. Steven Seagal is flying to Montana, Jean-Claude Van Damme is on his way to San Diego to appear at a comic book convention. And while the competition between the two is fierce – Seagal has even badmouthed Van Damme on TV – there's no confrontation between the two on this hot afternoon. In fact, neither acknowledges the other's presence. They simply get into their respective jets and fly their separate ways.

Of the two, Van Damme is clearly the rising star. While Seagal's latest films have misfired with moviegoers – and the star has taken hits offscreen for his temperamental behaviour – Van Damme is on a hot streak. His most recent film, Timecop, opened to good reviews and even better attendance, setting a box office record for the 33-year-old actor. So as he flies south with his fourth wife, Darcy LaPier, and his seven-year-old son Kristofer, from a previous marriage, his mood is relaxed.

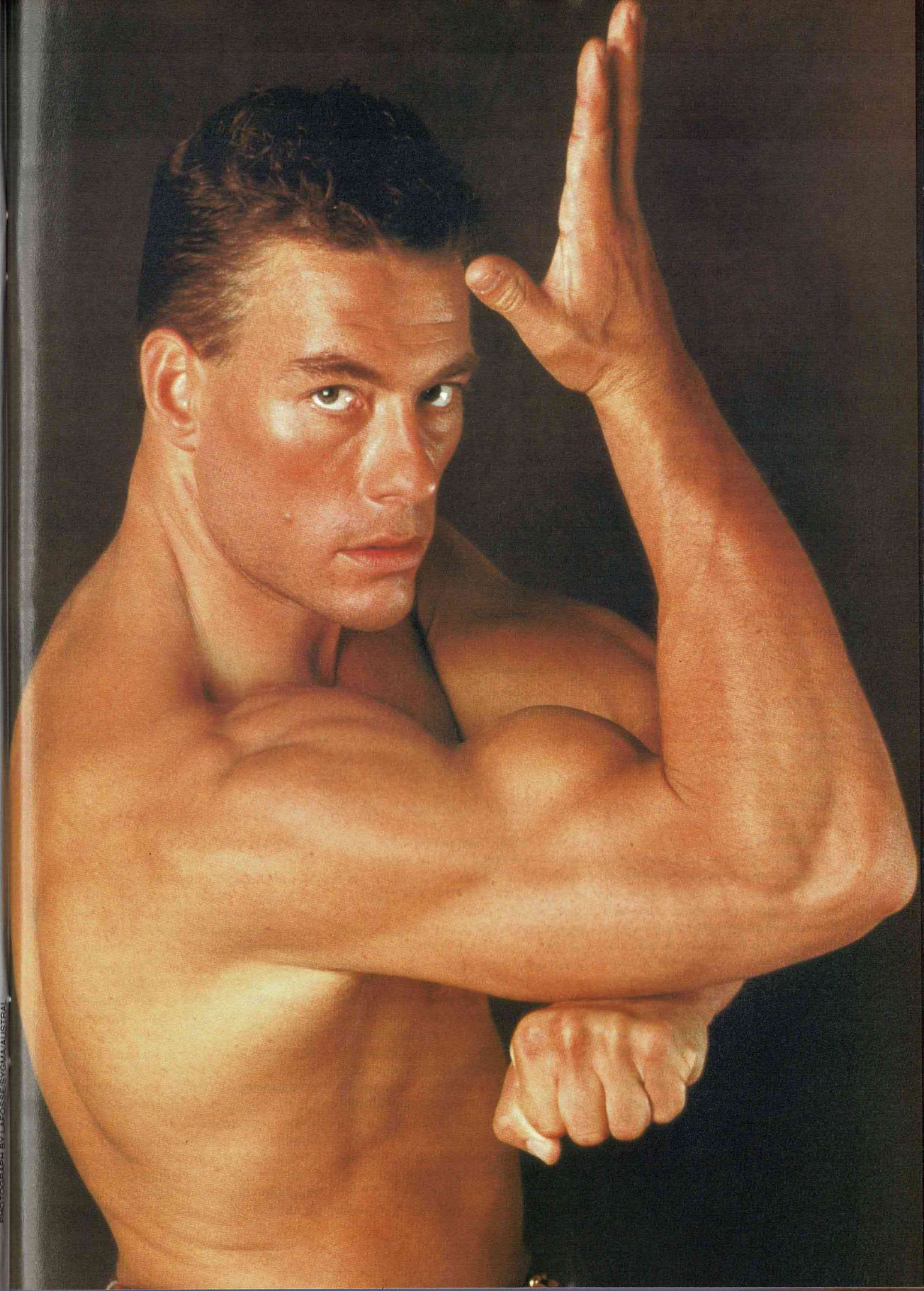
Later, as Van Damme enters a banquet hall at the San Diego convention centre, 2000 fans give him a standing ovation. No sooner does the crowd quiet down than a woman shouts, "Take off your shirt!"

After a half hour of talking to his fans he waves goodbye and is escorted into another room for a press conference to promote his two latest films: Timecop and Streetfighter. A reporter notices the bump on his forehead and asks if he had an accident. "No," Van Damme says, "it's a cyst. My wife says now that I'm a big movie star I should cut it out. What do you think? Should I?"

Van Damme was an unlikely prospect to face such movie-star dilemmas. He was born Jean-Claude Van Varenberg in Berchem-Sainte Agathe, just outside of Brussels, Belgium. A skinny, knock-kneed kid, he didn't care for school, talked with a lisp and got into trouble for mimicking his teachers. His father, who owned a lingerie shop, then a newspaper and convenience store and then a flower shop, had him study ballet and put him in a karate class when he was 11, where the boy suddenly became focused. He trained hard every day and was participating in bodybuilding and kickboxing competitions by his mid-teens. He won the Mr Belgium bodybuilding crown and the European middleweight black-belt karate championship. He married at 18, opened a gym in Brussels and became a personal trainer to his customers. But he wanted more.

Van Damme was eager to travel and have adventures – and even more eager to be a movie star. When he visited Paris, a photographer spotted him and offered him a job modelling clothes for Jean-Paul Gaultier. Another time, in Brussels, he was "discovered" and offered a job playing a soldier in a Rutger Hauer film. He decided to leave his first wife to pursue acting. He tried to break into the martial arts film industry in Hong Kong but had no luck, so he came to Los Angeles when he was 20, with little money and even less knowledge of English.

For the next six years he struggled – placing his picture and résumé on the windshields of movie producers' cars, working as a bodyguard, bouncer, aero-



PHOTOGRAPH BY LAFOSSE/SYGMA/AUSTRAL

bics instructor, taxi and limo driver, pizza deliveryman and carpet cleaner. Someone suggested he change his name and he did, from Van Varenberg to Van Damme. He married and divorced a second time.

He appeared briefly as a gay biker in a film called Morocco Forever, and Chuck Norris hired him as an extra in M.I.A. In 1986 he landed a role as a Russian bad guy in No Retreat, No Surrender. But his big break happened when he ran into Cannon Pictures' co-owner Menahem Golan outside a restaurant. Figuring he had nothing to lose, he got Golan's attention and then shot his leg straight out and over the producer's head. Golan was sufficiently impressed and offered to make him a star. The vehicle was Bloodsport, a Thai kickboxing movie, and Van Damme felt the long wait was over.

But the movies created new frustrations. Cannon didn't release Bloodsport for 19 months. In the meantime, Van Damme (who was now promoting himself as Van Dammage, the Muscles from Brussels and Wham, Bam, Thank You, Van Damme) signed contracts with independent film companies to do other low-budget films. By the time Bloodsport was released and became a cult success, Van Damme was tied to low-paying companies for the next five years, making such action films as Cyborg, Death Warrant, Kickboxer, Lionheart and Double Impact, which all made money. When he was finally released from contractual obligations, he made Universal Soldier for Carolco, Hard Target with Chinese director John Woo and Nowhere To Run with Patricia Arquette.

Van Damme's rise has not been without controversy. He lost a recent lawsuit brought by an actor injured during a fight scene in Cyborg – Van Damme will pay close to three-quarters of a million dollars in damages. Another lawsuit, by a woman who claims the actor forced her to have oral sex with him and then participate in a foursome, has yet to be resolved.

There was also a messy divorce from his third wife, bodybuilder Gladys Portugues, who is the mother of his two children, Kristofer and Bianca, three. Wife number four, Darcy, was married to Ron Rice, the Hawaiian Tropic suntan-oil mogul. An affair between Van Damme and Darcy led to the breakup of both marriages and has resulted in Van Damme's greatest anguish: he is separated from his children, who live with their mother in Belgium.

Contributing editor ***Lawrence Grobel*** *met with the man who might be Arnold.*

PLAYBOY: You complained earlier about the heat and lack of air conditioning. But here we are, on the hottest day of the year, and you're floating in your swimming pool at high noon without an ounce of sunscreen. Are you brave or foolish?

VAN DAMME: I never use those creams. I don't need them. It's the genes. My mother never used creams. I sit in the sun, I get red, then I get dark.

PLAYBOY: The red part means you burn like the rest of us. That's not too smart these days, Jean-Claude.

VAN DAMME: I do not worry. It doesn't harm me.

PLAYBOY: Do you really think you're Superman?

VAN DAMME: I've got news for you – I'm nothing special. You are talking to a guy who was not raised on the street, who didn't do drugs or crazy stuff, who comes from a simple country with simple people. I'm not deep, not super smart, not stupid, just a normal guy. I have two dogs, a house. I like to train, I love life.

PLAYBOY: You don't wind up with two major releases within three months by being simple. The expectations for *Streetfighter* are high – it's supposed to be your $100 million breakthrough film.

VAN DAMME: I would love the movie to be successful because the guy who did it, Mr Sugimoto of Matsushita, put two big studios – Columbia and Universal – together for the first time since *Towering Inferno*. He put in his own money from his company and I received a good salary, double what I got for *Timecop*. So I was crazy not to do it.

PLAYBOY: He has already invested more money in remaking the *Street Fighter* video game with your image. Have you seen it?

VAN DAMME: They've had 600 people working on this one video game for the last two years. When I asked what it was about they said, "Top secret." I know it's unusual and that they're using my face as Colonel Guile. So now the kids can play with Van Damme – jump, dance, kick, get punched. I'm part of a phenomenon.

PLAYBOY: And how are you in the film?

VAN DAMME: I'm funny, like over the top.

PLAYBOY: Did you feel that way about your performance in *Timecop*?

VAN DAMME: In *Timecop* I did everything – break arms, kick, jump, do a split, do karate, aikido, street-fight, knife fight. I even fought with tools. Plus it was an intelligent movie.

PLAYBOY: Did you always want to be a movie star?

VAN DAMME: Absolutely. I was crazy about movies since I was born. I wanted to go to America to become a movie star. My father was against me to go to the US. "Crazy," he said. "You'll never make it. So many kids like you, and they speak the language." Everybody tells me it's impossible, but when you have something in your head, you have to do it.

PLAYBOY: But weren't you already a success? You owned a gym in Belgium when you were still a teenager.

VAN DAMME: I was making a fortune with the gym – $9500 a week, more than my father ever made. I was 19. I called it California Gym, and it was the biggest in Belgium. But I gave it all up – the business, my family, even though I love my parents, my first marriage – to come here. And when I came here it was difficult. I didn't speak English, I had no work permit. But I was happy. And full of ambition.

PLAYBOY: You make it sound easy.

VAN DAMME: It was not easy. Nothing happened for a long time. I learned the hard way.

"See, I am flexible. I can do kicks, everything. I'm a young Chuck Norris. Maybe one day a Stallone. So what do you say?"

PLAYBOY: Did you continue to train while you looked for film work?

VAN DAMME: I was very methodic. I was training four times a week, working at least 10 hours a day, then going to casting, talking to people. I was always pushing, pushing, pushing.

PLAYBOY: Did you get any interesting work?

VAN DAMME: No. I was driving limousine. I did massage. Delivered pizza. Cleaned carpets. I was a bouncer.

PLAYBOY: Did you enjoy any of that work?

VAN DAMME: When I drove a limousine I took two women from Texas who were 40ish. They asked me, "Driver, do you have something to chew on?" I said, "Yes, bubble gum." "No, we want something to chew on, something in our mouths." They were trying to take me.

PLAYBOY: And you didn't want these women to perform oral sex on you?

VAN DAMME: They were ugly.

PLAYBOY: Did you run into such problems when you gave massages?

VAN DAMME: My first one. This guy took off his robe and he was naked. I said, "Do you have a towel?" He said, "Oh, I don't need it." I started to massage his back and he opened his legs. I said, "Buddy, that's it. I'm leaving." He stands up, it was half hard. I have nothing against homosexuals – I got lots of friends that are gay. But that was it for massage.

PLAYBOY: During this time you were also sticking your picture on car windshields, hoping a producer might call. Did you ever hear from anyone?

VAN DAMME: Nobody. I even went to the parking lots of the big studios like MGM and Fox, and also to the independent studios, which were more approachable. I always looked at the big cars – they were the producers'. I left pictures of myself and my phone number. Thousands of pictures. Sometimes I followed some cars to see the houses. People think I'm nuts, but it wasn't to harm anybody.

Van Damme in Universal Soldier

PLAYBOY: Your suffering stopped when you finally got Menahem Golan, the co-owner of Cannon Pictures, to put you in a movie. What's the real story of how you caught his attention?

VAN DAMME: I tried to meet him for five, six years. Then I was going into a restaurant and he was coming out. I said, "Menahem, it's me, Jean-Claude Van Damme. Remember all the pictures I sent you?" He was busy doing business. So I said, "I can do great action films." And I kicked above his head, like a 6'2" (188cm) kick. I impress him. He gave me his card and said, "Call me tomorrow."

PLAYBOY: He didn't think you were crazy? You could have kicked him in the head.

VAN DAMME: No, the guy is from Israel. He came with 20 bucks to this country, he liked that stuff. The next day I called him, he wasn't available. So I drove to his office. Now imagine me, I was driving a taxi, cleaning carpets, delivering pizza. Here I am in the penthouse of Cannon, the biggest independent company at that time. They had signed Stallone for $13 million for *Over the Top*, and I was on the sofa outside waiting for Menahem, who was on the phone shouting some deal. I thought, He likes to yell, he's a salesman. I was there one pm, two pm, three pm, four pm, five pm, six pm. Sitting there all day as people came in and out. Finally he came out, tucking his shirt into his pants, and I go inside. This time I think, Jean-Claude, you're here for six years, everything is shit, this is your only chance to have a small part in a movie. Don't panic, don't sweat your hand when you shake his, be strong. I felt all Belgium was behind me. Because many times people there cross my father, and they say to him, "Hey, we heard your son is a punching boy in America. How's the punching boy?" My father was in shame. I gave up my gym and everything. Imagine my father. I know about how Menahem came to America with $20, so I say to him, "I came to this country with $40 and I have nothing and I hope one day I can be somebody. I'm here for six years, nothing is going well in my life, so let's cut the bullshit. I know I've got something special. I'm inexpensive and I'm very good. You can make so much money with me, you can make me a star." I was almost in tears, and he saw my eyes were real. I said, "Look at my body," and I started to take off my shirt. "See the muscles I have." Then I took two chairs and did a split balanced between them.

He said, "My friend, you want to be a star? I'll make you a star. You got a green card?" I say yes, which is a big fucking lie. "Do you have a lawyer?" "I will tomorrow." "An agent?" "Tomorrow." "Then you're going to make a movie. You're going to be the lead in *Bloodsport*."

My legs are like cotton balls. I can't believe it. When I leave I'm jumping all over like an idiot.

But then *Bloodsport* was delayed and delayed. Four months later I was on a plane to Hong Kong. Thank God it was set in Hong Kong.

PLAYBOY: Could you have done it in the States without a green card?

VAN DAMME: No. It was a good script, but they kept changing it. So the story ended up in the garbage and they kept losing sight of the movie. I had to recut the film myself.

PLAYBOY: Why would Golan let you do that?

VAN DAMME: Because he saw the movie. He hated it. He said, "Van Damme, it's a very bad movie." I go, "Menahem, I beg you, I saw it too, let me recut it." And I cut the movie every night with the guy who cut *The Towering Inferno*. The producer didn't know I was recutting it. I was such a politician. I didn't say nothing to him, I reported to Menahem every week. Then they put the film on the shelf, so he never saw the new version. It was not released for a year and a half. Then Menahem released it in France and all those countries, and I flew everywhere to promote it. I paid my own ticket to Malaysia, where it was the biggest box office. Two weeks later I flew to France, did karate kick for a magazine, did a split on the Champs Élysées. Big success because of the fighting scenes. Now you go to Asia, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, *Bloodsport* is unrentable in the video stores – it's always gone. It's a cult.

PLAYBOY: Did Golan know he had a hit?

VAN DAMME: After he saw the box office he knew. He called me into his office and said, "Van Damme, the iron is hot. We'll do two more movies." By then I had waited so many months. I had other things I wanted to do, and also I had signed some contracts with small companies. So I said, "You said you don't

need me no more." He said, "My friend, I made you a star. I'm going to sue your ass off." He didn't pay me a penny more. Instead of giving me $130,000 for the second movie, he gave me $65,000. Big mistake. I did *Death Warrant* and *Cyborg* for him and that was it. But I love Menahem because he gave me my first chance.

PLAYBOY: After the success of *Bloodsport*, you really weren't free to work for any of the major studios, were you?

VAN DAMME: No. So many studios called me for projects, but I wasn't available for, like, five years. I had signed these other contracts before *Bloodsport* came out. With Cannon it was one film, two options. With another company one film, two options. A third company also one film, two options. That's nine low-budget films, below $6.5 million for each one. That's why I made all those movies like *Kickboxer* and *Double Impact*. It was a factory, three movies a year, no cast, first-time directors. I didn't do good as an actor. But you know what? They all made money. I became a star with those movies.

PLAYBOY: You've said in the past that they were "silly" movies. What do you mean?

VAN DAMME: I just wish that before those movies opened people should know that they were made for low, low money. So forgive this actor if sometimes he has to scream for two minutes and he has no explosions and no bullets, no special effects.

PLAYBOY: Perhaps that's why they seem so authentic, like in *Kickboxer* when you kick down a bamboo tree.

VAN DAMME: I kicked the tree for real.

PLAYBOY: Did it hurt?

VAN DAMME: When the camera was rolling it felt good. It was my second time in the movies – I was hungry.

PLAYBOY: You've been compared with Arnold. Do you like that?

VAN DAMME: Arnold is smart and I think I am smart, too. We both came from Europe – he came with weightlifting, I came with karate, and maybe that's why people compare us. But you cannot compare Arnold and Van Damme.

PLAYBOY: What about as actors? Arnold has proved himself to many critics, but there's still that question about you: can he act? Does that annoy you?

VAN DAMME: Yeah, it annoys me. People look at me with attitude if I tell them, yes, I can act. There are two different types of acting: body acting and face acting. Brando dying in *The Godfather*, Stallone punching the meat in *Rocky* – if you can act emotionally you can act visually, physically. You don't learn acting – it's all mood, it's all from inside, from your heart. Why do people come to see me? Because I cannot act? I think deeply I can act, but I know I'll become better. I'm not there yet. Imagine if I can do action, drama, romance – what's going to be next? How far can I go? It's all a question of wanting. But if I say that one day I'd like to be perceived as a Pacino, a De Niro, a Hopkins, they're going to say I'm a nut case.

Van Damme in Hard Target

PLAYBOY: Do you foresee a time when you will make films without exhibiting your martial arts skills?

VAN DAMME: Absolutely. But it's difficult to leave the image behind. It's difficult for Stallone to leave *Rocky*, he was so good. That and *Rambo* are like a stamp on his forehead. But when he made *F.I.S.T.* he was a good union guy. When you become a thing it's difficult because you're a piece in a puzzle.

PLAYBOY: Another action star you're often compared with is Steven Seagal, who apparently badmouthed you on *Arsenio Hall*. What do you think of him?

VAN DAMME: I like him a lot. The first movie I saw of his, *Above The Law*, I knew he was going to be a big star. Seagal has a quiet, strong presence and he was very smart about something: he did action movies with a suit on. People like that.

PLAYBOY: Why did he badmouth you?

VAN DAMME: I don't know. He doesn't know me. When I was promoting *Timecop* every reporter asked me about Seagal. I've only met him twice in my life. Why does he hate me?

PLAYBOY: Maybe he thinks there isn't room enough for the two of you.

VAN DAMME: We're two tough guys. If he loses weight we will have enough room.

PLAYBOY: Would you like to do a movie with him?

VAN DAMME: The combination of Seagal and Van Damme can be a hot movie – it's like putting Arnold and Sly together in a comedy. If Seagal and Van Damme joined forces it could be great because people want to see Van Damme against Seagal. It's like seeing Holyfield and Tyson. But it will never happen.

PLAYBOY: Because one of you would have to lose?

VAN DAMME: Exactly. And I hate to lose.

PLAYBOY: Which means Seagal would have to lose to you?

VAN DAMME: No, we both have to win.

PLAYBOY: Are your legs considered lethal weapons?

VAN DAMME: I fought a lot in the ring, but if I fight for real I will kill. I swear to God, I will kill. I cannot fight, because my kicks will kill. Also, if I hit somebody now I'll be sued for millions.

PLAYBOY: Seagal practises aikido, and you've studied Thai kickboxing. Which is more dangerous?

VAN DAMME: In aikido you do something with your hands, you have to grab somebody and roll them down. You don't grab a guy with kickboxing – that's bullshit. In a real street fight you don't grab people. Kickboxing, you hit first. The guy will not grab you.

PLAYBOY: Can a kickboxing champion take a boxer like Tyson?

VAN DAMME: You cannot compare. If you take the best champion in Muay Thai kickboxing, what he will do with Tyson is go for his legs with powerful, low kicks. He can break your knee. Kickboxing allows elbow, knee, foot. A boxer knows from the waist up, not the legs. If Tyson comes at me, I kick him – boom! – he's out. If I'm backed into a corner against the rope, who's going to win? Tyson? Maybe. But a kickboxer can give him an elbow, bam! Twelve stitches. The boxer cannot use his knees, his elbows, his head.

PLAYBOY: Name the best martial arts films.

VAN DAMME: *Enter The Dragon*. And that Kurosawa movie where the girl comes to the village and the guy cleans the village of all the bandits, *Seven Samurai*. And also *The Charolin Temple* with Jack Lee. He's the treasure of Asia.

PLAYBOY: What about *The Karate Kid*?

VAN DAMME: It was good for kids, but I hated it.

PLAYBOY: *Enter The Dragon* was one of Bruce Lee's most popular films. Was he a role model for you?

VAN DAMME: Bruce was fantastic, very special. The camera loved him. He was one of the first actors who came with a body on the screen. Before, there was Steve Reeves. But don't forget, before Bruce Lee was a karate guy he was *sur la planche* – on the wood. That means theatre. When he was 13 he was acting. If you look at some of his movies, when he fights in slow motion, frame by frame, it's not too technical. But it looks great on camera.

PLAYBOY: You're saying that he exaggerated certain moves for the camera. Don't you do that too?

VAN DAMME: The same. But I have my own style. I don't imitate anybody.

PLAYBOY: Who are some of the authentic tough guys on the screen?

VAN DAMME: Sean Connery's real tough. I heard stories from people. I met him once. Strong. The guy you see on the screen is the guy you see in life. I met Charles Bronson once too. He's a very powerful guy, a man's man. I love *Hard Times*. De Niro, Steve McQueen. Mickey Rourke. To me, he was as gifted as Pacino and he lost it. Maybe he can come back.

PLAYBOY: Has it been easier to attract women since you've become famous?

VAN DAMME: Before I became a star it was more easy for me. Because I'm a good-looking kid. When I was unknown I had all the girls I wanted in the world. Since I'm known, they are scared of me.

PLAYBOY: What qualities attract you to a woman?

VAN DAMME: Intelligence, charm, class, beauty, sense of humour.

PLAYBOY: What would happen if you discovered your wife in bed with another man?

VAN DAMME: I would not get violent. I will be pissed like crazy, but I would go, "Guys, sorry to disturb you. Take your time, enjoy and when you finish I'll come back for my baggage, okay?" Because if I get violent, it's one more reason for her to fuck around. You want to be the champ, you act like a champ.

PLAYBOY: You're telling us that if you walked in on your wife and she was screwing another guy in your bed –

VAN DAMME: No, not in my bed. When a guy touch my bed, it's no longer my bed. If he touch my toothbrush, it's not my toothbrush.

PLAYBOY: And if he's touching your wife –

VAN DAMME: It's finished. No going back. The guy fuck you once, he fuck you twice. Same with a woman.

PLAYBOY: Let's get back to the movies. Who are the directors you admire?

VAN DAMME: Oliver Stone is really special. I love also Adrian Lyne, Alan Parker, James Cameron, Brian De Palma, John Milius, Sergio Leone.

When Tyson fights, he thinks about his next fight. When a Thai guy fights, there is no tomorrow. Elbow in the face, knee in the head.

PLAYBOY: Did you talk with any of them when you decided to direct *The Quest*?

VAN DAMME: I talked with Stone. He's talking to me because he's got some respect – he likes me because I came from Belgium with nothing and became somebody. I explained to him the story, my opening scene, and he said, "Why do you need me? You have all the shots in your head."

PLAYBOY: In each of your films, you always get pretty beaten up before you emerge victorious. That doesn't happen much with Seagal. Is that part of your formula?

VAN DAMME: It's good to see a guy who gets some beating. Because all the world champions take punches in the ring. Besides, it is just fun stuff, it's not dangerous. In a real fight, a guy takes a glass, breaks it and goes for your face. That's what I call a fight.

PLAYBOY: Do you think it helps you in your films that you have a baby face?

VAN DAMME: It helps. Look at Tom Hanks, Tom Cruise, Harrison Ford. Baby faces. Look at Arnold – even if he's smart, strong, mature, he has that baby look. Look at Jimmy Dean, Montgomery Clift. They're vulnerable, all of them.

PLAYBOY: Yet you've said that you would prefer to look older.

VAN DAMME: Because people like me more when I'm older, they have more respect. When you're 33 and you look 28 on the screen trying to kick ass with a big bandit, you look like a kid. To me Arnold, Sly and Seagal have better faces – you believe them.

PLAYBOY: Are there any actresses you'd like to work with?

VAN DAMME: Roseanne. She's very funny. I would love to do a film with her. She is fantastic and a good actress. So clever. And in a sense she is beautiful. Look at her face, her eyes. She's lovable. Imagine a guy like Van Damme who dates a woman like Roseanne in a movie – pure love, it can be so special.

PLAYBOY: Roseanne is a surprising choice. Anyone else?

VAN DAMME: Madonna can be hot. You saw *Truth Or Dare*? She's got something, pal. She's got tons of charisma.

Imagine a movie: Madonna and Van Damme!

PLAYBOY: You've picked two women who haven't exactly sizzled at the box office.

VAN DAMME: I'll make them look good on film, don't worry about it.

PLAYBOY: Last year *Entertainment Weekly* called you egomaniacal, erratic, homophobic and sexist. How do you plead?

VAN DAMME: What's homophobic?

PLAYBOY: Anti-gay.

VAN DAMME: What's erratic?

PLAYBOY: All over – one day hot, the next day cold. Irregular.

VAN DAMME: I am high and low, that's true. Sexist?

PLAYBOY: To be chauvinistic, not to treat women as equals.

VAN DAMME: Wrong. What else?

PLAYBOY: Egomaniacal.

VAN DAMME: They are only right in one thing: erratic.

PLAYBOY: Well, what are your weaknesses?

VAN DAMME: I love food. And I'm impatient.

PLAYBOY: That's it? What is the image you have of yourself?

VAN DAMME: I'm very happy with myself. I'm straightforward. I'm honest with people. I've got real balls. If I need to save a friend, I will go headfirst. So I'm more of a hero in real life than in the movies. Because in movies I let people do this and that to me as an action star. In real life I'm very strong.

PLAYBOY: You mean you want to be a bigger hero on the screen? Isn't it enough that women scream for you to take off your shirt?

VAN DAMME: I'm glad they are thinking about me and that they love the guy on the screen. But if they meet the real Van Damme they will go even more crazy. Because in real life I'm a romantic. I love

(continued on page 103)

SEXY CUTS

Lucie Benesnova may sometimes seem a shy girl, but when she sees scissors . . .

When I came into Jaroslav's studio and saw their scissors, immediately I got the idea," laughs Lucie. "I took them and began to cut. T-shirts, knickers, stockings – everything. In the end I was almost naked. I had to borrow a pullover to get home in a decent way."

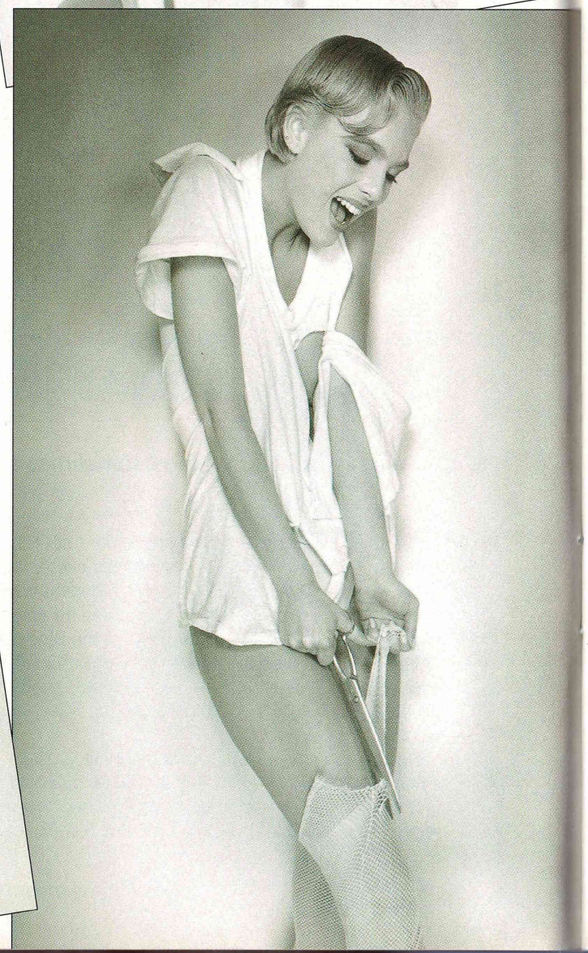
In her native Czechoslovakia, Lucie is an actor and played in the theatre of Lud k Sobota for two and a half years. For another year she worked in the Black Theatre and she has also appeared in several films.

The drudgery and restrictions of her studies, however, forced her from school and into the real world. "I have a lot of plans," says Lucie. "I always had, even during my studies, but it was impossible to realise them. I had problems with the way I played my film roles – my teachers restricted me to play them only one way. That was why I left the school."

Not a professional photographic model, Lucie has only had the occasional fashion and advertisements job since she started at 15. This pictorial is, in a way, her artistic photo debut.

Lucie looks at her photos with interest: it's evident she is satisfied with the results. "I always dreamed I would be a film star, but now I am not certain . . . Maybe I'd better work as a film editor." Lucie smiles.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAROSLAV SIMANDL



GEOFF THOMPSON DELVES INTO THE WORLD OF THE INTERNET, WHERE "SAFE SEX" TAKES ON A WHOLE NEW MEANING . . .

Love BYTES

With quiet but determined strokes she aroused him. He felt the tension rising inside. Returning her touch he marvelled at how soft and smooth her presence felt under his fingertips. "Take me" was her silent message. He moved his hand down, slowly, raising his fingers to lighten his touch, to tease. Finally, with both of them aching for each other he . . . punched the return key.

•

Skeeve Stevens doesn't have any complaints about the intrusion of the silicon chip into our lives. For a start, his love life would be considerably more desolate if it wasn't for his artificially intelligent friends.

While other lonely souls spend the wee hours wandering through smoky clubs and pubs in search of friendship, love and sex, Skeeve is also on the prowl – but he hasn't left the comfort of his dusty old couch – the brown throne he has affectionately dubbed his "Star Trek chair". From his humble Bondi abode, perched before $20,000 of computer hardware, this 22-year-old "Internet" consultant feels very much in control.

And like Captain Kirk, he too is doing his best to boldly go where no man has been before – straight onto the computer screens of girls he has yet to meet.

"I've met my last five girlfriends either on the Internet or through friends I've met on the Internet," he proudly declares.

ILLUSTRATION BY CAMERON SINGLETON

Love BYTES

Lounging back with bare feet and spraying the odd burst of deodorant into the air above his shoes, Skeeve makes an unlikely playboy.

But there he is, keyboard in his lap, a Coke one side and a tub of Homer Hudson ice cream on the other, his fingers drumming one-liners to his Internet "babes".

For those ostriches out there who still don't yet what the Internet (or "the net") is, a short lesson is probably in order.

The net is an electronically mediated vast communications web that links, via modems, computers and telephone lines, over 30 million users in 33 different countries. Indeed some estimate that the number of people who have access to the net may be closer to 60 million. Similarly, it is thought that over one million Australians have access to the net, although only 70 per cent may be regular users.

And the number of users is growing by 20 to 30 per cent worldwide each year. In Australia the larger modem companies all doubled their business last financial year, and most of these sales went to people and companies seeking to hop on-line.

The net was built on the electronic foundations laid first by the United States military, and then by the universities. Even today, most net users have access through university computers even though they may be dialling in from a computer at home.

Users have an account that gives them access to the net, and some Australian universities provide access to their students for free.

But just in the past year, commercial interest in the net has gone ballistic. It is estimated that about 80 per cent of the net access providers in the United States are now commercial operators, and at the beginning of last year, commercial net companies serviced about 5 per cent of the Australian market – that figure is now closer to 60 per cent.

Either way you look at it, the number of on-line "babes" that Skeeve Stevens has to chase is growing out of control. But even his antics are small time when compared with others.

Just recently, Skeeve got one helluva surprise when he "logged on" to his favourite cyberspace destination – Internet Relay Chat (IRC). IRC is an on-line, worldwide, text-based, nonstop, meeting place where "netheads" from all over the world gather to chat day and night. (When it's peak IRC hour in Australia, it's quiet in the United States – so bleary eyed Internet junkies always have someone to rave with.)

The floating population of IRC overall is estimated at around 100,000, but at any one time there will be about 6500 people nattering away on it from all around the globe. On average there are about 350 Australians tuned in at any one time, and users often go by a nickname or a "nick" as they like to call it.

There are hundreds of channels on IRC, both public and private. They range from the very popular social channel "#Aussies" through to the more specialised, such as channel "#Jackoff".

If someone with an IRC link knows a channel name, they can dial in from anywhere in the world.

One night, while surfing about on channel #Aussies, Skeeve was happy to see the name of his friend Ian, from the Bondi Junction CES, pop into view. But something was not quite right – Ian was dialling in from Alaska.

The number of on-line "babes" that Skeeve Stevens has to chase is growing out of control. But even his antics are small time when compared with others.

"What are you doing, Ian?" he asked. "You're not in Alaska!"

Ian replied that yes, indeed, he was.

"What are you doing there?" enquired Skeeve.

To his shock and pleasure, he was told that Ian, a Bondi boy, had fallen for an Alaskan girl he met on IRC. He flew over to meet her and they were married two days later.

And this is by no means an uncommon phenomenon.

Skeeve knows of at least four other married couples whose flirting and courting days were spent on the net. Glancing across a crowded computer screen, can it be love at first type?

No, its not that simple, according to the IRC *aficionados*. They say the IRC crowd are an intimate bunch and many of them are in daily communication with each other. They even scan pictures of themselves into their computers and send them down the phone-line.

A woman called Lorraine recently flew over from California and is now engaged to a guy in Wollongong. And Halley, also from California, is already married to net-friend Jason from Sydney.

The Sydney IRC scene is "very promiscuous" according to Skeeve. He says their relationships are "a combination between the net and real life". And with a "real-life" floating population of about 150, members tend to meet up at least once a week.

"Now, I'd be fairly unlikely to get together with anyone who wasn't on the net or who didn't have knowledge of it," says Kirrily from the Melbourne IRC scene. She boasts that owing to her on-line connections, she never has to pay for accommodation if she travels within Australia or in the United States.

"I get about 200 pieces of electronic mail (email) a day, but I'd be lucky to get one phone call. My father recently complained that I didn't ring him enough and I said, 'get an email account and I'll be in touch'."

Kirrily, or "Skud" as she is known on the net, runs a bondage and discipline, sadomasochism (BDSM) on-line mail and news service.

This basically means she presides over a forum that acts as a place to exchange ideas and information on bondage and S&M. She says similar on-line support and chat groups are very popular among gays, bisexuals and lesbians.

According to Kirrily, these sort of on-line support groups provide an invaluable service to people with sexual interests that make them feel isolated. In addition to the openly gay participants, it's thought that many young people who may have gay inclinations but haven't openly come to terms with their sexuality can access these resources to receive support, help and advice.

Also, older people, who haven't "come out" yet in "real life", can explore their sexuality in these groups.

But there is also on-line sex-related interaction between people that is much more direct.

One type is called "netsex". This phenomenon involves people basically meeting somewhere like on a public channel such as IRC, getting to know each other and then retiring to a private channel to fondle each other with words. It also takes place in what are known as MOOS and MUDS – they're like IRC, but rather than be themselves, people take on characters in a role playing game.

Josh, another Sydney based IRC enthusiast, estimates that at any one time there would be up to 300 people netsexing around the world. There are even channels such as "#hottub", where netsex enthusiasts can take a dip if they like.

The system is not without its problems however, and one netsex problem that Josh has encountered is when the time-lag between entries is too long. Some IRC connections are not too fast, and that well worded foreplay might have completely lost its spice by the time it connects with the eyes of your netsex partner.

In other words, the timing is everything.

Some people take it seriously, others do not. Kirrily for example takes it all with a grain of salt.

"Some people really get into it – I distance myself from it, knowing it's something else," she says. "But I've watched some people who really get into it."

The problem is that netsex can be misleading or uninvited – a situation exacerbated by people gender switching, that is, coming on-line pretending to be a woman rather than a man, and vice versa. Kirrily explains:

"Stupid guys come into lesbian channels pretending to be women and they'll say things like, 'Any hot babes here?' The women know what they're up to straight away, and they soon sort them out."

But there have been occasions when the sex of someone on the net has not been so transparent.

The American cyberspace theorist Allucquere Rosanne Stone has written about a person she met on a computer conference in New York in the mid-'80s. The net user, whom she calls "Julie", was a "totally disabled older woman" who could only just manage to push the keys of her computer.

Julie, whose disability was invisible and irrelevant on the net, gained the confidence of many other women who shared their deepest intimacies with her. This went on until the day when one of her admirers tracked her down in "real life" and it was revealed that Julie was in fact a middle-aged male psychiatrist. The news shook the on-line female friends of "Julie", with one woman saying she felt raped.

Apparently, once he had begun, "Julie" couldn't resist. According to Stone he later said:

"I was stunned at the conversation . . . I hadn't known that women talked among themselves that way. There was so much vulnerability, so much more depth and complexity. Men's conversations on the nets were much more guarded and superficial, even among intimates. It was fascinating and I wanted more."

But this curious fellow's intentions are fairly innocent compared with many men on the net. Blatant and open sexual harassment happens regularly.

One British woman told the British newspaper *The Independent* that:

"The mere fact that I'm a woman makes me fair game in the eyes of many. I can't tell you how many times I've been harassed, asked for 'phone sex' and badgered for what is known as a 'hot chat', until I've finally logged off in disgust."

Indeed, in the United States there are moves towards having the same anti-stalking laws that cover obscene telephone calls and harassment by mail apply to on-line lechers.

A large part of the problem is the demographics of the on-line community. Worldwide, some estimates suggest that the on-line population consists of 20 males to every female.

According to Skeeve Stevens, however, the situation is no longer so bleak in Australia (much to his delight), and from a population that was about 90 per cent male a few years ago, Stevens estimates channel #Aussies has now balanced out to be around 60/40 male to female.

Part of making the net more attractive to women has been to control some of the excesses of male behaviour, and while it's nearly impossible to control the net from the outside, through censorship and government regulation, it does have its own high priests of discipline.

People who have been part of an on-line community for a while get awarded what is known as "ops". An abbreviation of "channel operator" (also called "chanops" or "chops"), they have the power to "kick" other people off the channel if they believe they are being unduly disruptive, nasty or offensive. This power is granted by the "sysops" or "opers" (for example, the actual IRC operators), who are affectionately known as "gods". The sysops have the power to "KILL" users by breaking the link that connects them to the IRC.

This is not a cut and dry hierarchy, and rampaging politics are rife. In the

ADDICTED!!

While it is clear that the Internet and phenomena such as IRC are very social places, the world of video games and computer gaming machines are just the opposite.

There can be little doubt that the introduction of computer card machines as "approved amusement machines" into pubs has changed the social atmosphere. Many people now sit in pubs not to chat, but just to stare at cards flashing up on a screen while they pour money into the slot. Claire Kendall, manager of the Crown Hotel in Sydney, says that there are "people who come in and put their entire wages through in one sitting".

Others, she says, sit for the entire day at card machines and just trickle money through the slot, while not really winning or losing. Still others, usually professional gamblers, can win quite well.

And so it's not news to most people that computer card machines, like so many other forms of gambling, can be addictive. But what is less known, is that there may be an addictive relationship between children's computer video games and computer gambling machines. Among others of her profession, British psychologist Sue Fisher believes that video games are addictive and the addiction is similar to that found in gamblers.

At 33 years old, however, Alex Cram is no kid, but he admits to being addicted to the surreal, CD-ROM fantasy game *Myst*.

"For three or four weeks it was the only thing I could think about, and during that time there is no doubt that it affected my life and relationships," says Alex.

"The weirdest thing was that I'd walk down the street, see things and try to click on them, like you would in the game – you forget it's reality."

Phenomena like this have led American theorist Vivian Sobchack to unleash a stinging attack on cyber-culture and its adherents. Referring to one of the cyberspace fanzines, *Mondo 2000 (M2)*, in the *South Atlantic Quarterly*, she said:

"Hiding under the guise of populism, the liberation politics touted in the pages of *M2* are the stuff of a romantic, swashbuckling, irresponsible individualism that fills the dreams of mondoids (devotees of *M2*) who, by day, sit at computer consoles working for (and becoming) corporate America.

"The Revenge of the Nerds is that they have found ways to figure themselves to the rest of us (particularly those of us intrigued by, but generally ignorant of electronics) as sexy, hip, and heroic, as New Age Mutant Ninja Hackers . . ."

Sobchack leaves little doubt to what she sees as the destructive nature of cyberspace and the future it holds for its addicts.

"Focusing on electronic, quasi-disembodied forms of kinesis ('safe' travel without leaving your desk), interaction ('safe' sociality without having to reveal your identity or 'true name'), and eroticism ('safe' sex without risking an exchange of bodily fluids), the New Age Mutant Ninja Hacker's ambivalent desire to be powerful, heroic, committed, and yet safe within his (computer) shell leads to an oxymoronic mode of being one might describe as *interactive autism*."

"I didn't know the National Parks were this fussy."

Love BYTES

spirit of procedural fairness, operators are usually required to give reasons for their actions – and they don't always agree with others.

"Op wars" between operators occasionally occur, but there is a "netiquette" governing on-line behaviour and those who are disrespectful of the social codes and taboos will be booted off. It follows that any "newbies" looking for some on-line rape and pillage should keep their fingers well under control if they want to survive.

It's a piece of advice that some Sydney pub dwellers may have already found out about. The spread of the net is no longer restricted to those who own their own hardware, and a business called the Speakeasy Public Access Network has installed coin-operated computer terminals, with links to the Internet, in four Sydney pubs. They include the Great Northern Hotel in Chatswood, Albert's Tavern in North Sydney, The Fortune of War Hotel in the Rocks and Norths Rugby Club in St Leonards.

If you look hard enough, you'll find these terminals nestled in among the computer card machines. For two bucks for 10 minutes you can dial into IRC and chat to people around Australia and all over the world. There are over 10 countries to choose from. When I was at Albert's Tavern, a girl dialled up France and chatted to some mystery French boys for about half an hour.

But, surprisingly, the Internet connection is not the main focus of this venture. Rather, they are trying to drum up interest in their own bulletin board system (BBS) called "Matchmaker". This program is only linked between the other pubs that have a terminal installed, and the idea is that some lonely creature can leave their personal details on the bulletin board and hope that the love of their life might, by chance, wander into one of the other pubs and do the same.

Players can also chat between the pubs, but in the two hours I was at Albert's Tavern, late on Thursday night, not a single person logged on from another hotel. Not that the system doesn't have its uses. Peter Moon, one of the technical controllers for the on-line pub network, delighted in showing me that even his publicly accessible machine could dig deep into the networked nether worlds.

He demonstrated how anyone with the necessary technical know-how could pull up on the screen some pretty seriously ribald pictures from the vast ways of policing access to the X-rated material. In its report released in October last year, however, Attorney General Michael Lavarch all but admitted that controlling access to these services was impossible. He also admitted that "rapid improvements in technology and falling hardware prices have the potential to make access to bulletin boards far more widespread".

It should not be forgotten, however, that the net offers some really useful services. For instance, how many Australian *Playboy* readers know that American *Playboy* has an on-line service that can be accessed through a user-friendly piece of net software called World Wide Web? The service, called "*Playboy*: An electronic catalogue for Internet", (http://www.playboy.com) lets you read about American *Playboy*'s goals and aspirations as well as offering subscriptions to the magazine and the on-line *Playboy* Electronic Notebook as well as *Playboy* videos, posters and services offered by many other bulletin board services. All this in a demure little pub like North Sydney's Albert's Tavern!

Dear me, I thought, this must be what Kirrily calls the "complete wank material" that people can subscribe to. These type of services offer a range of on-line still photographs ranging from the very soft to the very hardcore porn. The services are available to anyone who has access to the technology and the money to subscribe. If it's available somewhere, somehow, there's a very good chance that it's also available on the net. After all, Australians are the second biggest users of bulletin boards after the United States.

It's just this type of freedom of information, however, that is generating some problems for "the net", because anyone with the right technology and know-how (including kids) can pull up on-screen pictures involving anything from bestiality through to paedophilia.

The federal government, under pressure over this issue, formed a Bulletin Board Task Force in an attempt to find

The computer can operate "as a sort of phallic fetish" so that "the bigger your machine, the bigger you are; the bigger and harder the drive, the better you feel".

books.

Even considering the infinite possibilities offered up by the computer networks, however, "the net" is just a portion of how computer technology is involving itself in our love and sex lives. And there are now those who believe that people can even have a kind of sexual connection with their computers and what they have to offer.

The American academic Claudia Springer believes that the pleasure we feel when we are at our computer terminals has a deeper meaning, and she says this "desire" cannot be automatically dismissed as a nonsexual feeling. She claims, invoking psychoanalysis, that the sense of abandonment and disembodiment we feel while getting lost in the cyberspace is reminiscent of the way we felt when we were in the womb! Hence it follows for Springer that "the pleasure of the interface" involves an invocation of motherly comfort!

Norie Neumark of University of Technology Sydney believes that computers can make up for feelings of sexual inadequacy or work to improve sexual prowess in the eyes of others. She says the computer can operate "as a sort of phallic fetish" so that "the bigger your machine, the bigger you are; the bigger and harder the drive, the better you feel". She recalls the story of one woman who told a group of male computer buffs that she had upgraded her machine. The woman said that, "Suddenly they treated me differently, like I had the biggest prick in the room."

Indeed, while there are fairy tale stories of love on the net, disappointment can also be real. Some on-line dating services in Britain have had their fair share of disappointments. One disgruntled woman recalled her experience.

"His on-line personality was totally different from the reality. It could have been a different man. He was ineffectual and frankly, very boring. The fact that we met in real life ruined our on-line relationship."

This distinction between "on-line" people and "real-life" people works both ways. Indeed the art of deception and its intricacies are part of life on the net. According to an IRC study by Elizabeth Reid of Melbourne, users do pretend to be something they're not, in order to be perceived as "attractive, impressive and popular". One user said:

"Well, I gotta admit, I shave a few pounds off my weight, when I tell the guys on IRC what I look like . . ."

So the system is far from perfect, and it doesn't always sound too appealing, but try telling Skeeve Stevens that.

A DICK CAIN ADVENTURE

Blood & Sex *in* Hong Kong

THE MAN WITH THE FAT IS BACK!

humour by Colin Bowles

They found Cain in an apartment in Kowloon with three others. He was the only one of the four who wasn't dead.

He was lying across the body of a nice-looking blonde who was sprawled up the stairs in a pink slip with a bullet through her brain. Cain – a poignant touch this – had his head lying on her bosom, like a small boy asleep in his mother's lap. But there the resemblance ended.

Cain, even unconscious, had the face of a truck driver, all hard lines and stubble. His lips were pale and Bogart droopy, with the pink welt of an old scar against his cheek. There was a pressed duck in his right hand, and a lump the size of a baseball on the back of his skull.

Richardson went through his pockets and all he found was a wallet with 84 Hong Kong dollars, a set of keys and a packet of untipped cigarettes.

ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL NEWMAN

Blood & Sex in Hong Kong

There was no clue as to who he was, or where he came from.

"When he wakes up," Richardson murmured, "This guy has a little explaining to do."

•

It all began two weeks ago. I woke up and threw my underpants at the wall. It's how I find out if I had a good time the night before. If they stay stuck to the wall, I did.

Herpes was sprawled across the bed, drooling and snoring. Herpes is my dog. I call him Herpes because he won't heel.

I stumbled into the kitchen and opened a tin of Pal. I tipped it into a bowl and poured some Winalot dog biscuits on top. Herpes looked up at me adoringly. "Shove off," I told him. "Go and get your own breakfast."

I looked around. It wasn't much of a place. Just a table, a chair, and a television with a condom on it. That was to remind me of the prick who stole my video. Not much to show, I guess, but then I'm not in this business for the money. Come to think of it, I don't know what I am in this business for.

I got ready to go out. I hunted around for my camouflage jacket but I couldn't find it. I guess it was just too well camouflaged. Then I grabbed my car keys and went outside. A New Zealander had stolen my car. I knew it was a New Zealander because only the sheepskin seat covers were missing.

When I got to the office Cherry, my secretary, was on the phone. "You don't say . . ." she breathed into the mouthpiece.

"Who is it, Cherry?"

"*You don't say?*" she gasped.

"Cherry, who is it?"

"You don't say?" she put down the phone.

"Who was that?" I hissed at her.

"I don't know, Mr Cain" she said. "He didn't say."

"So what's the news, Cherry?"

She looked at her notepad. "Someone set fire to the church last night."

"Holy smoke."

"And some thieves stole a battery from a patrol car at the local police station. The cops are appealing for leads."

"Anything else?"

"The doctor called. About your tests. He says he needs a sperm, urine and stool sample."

I slapped a package on the desk. "Here, send these over by courier."

"What is it?"

"A pair of my underpants."

I went into my office. Col was waiting for me. I knew Col from way back. We used to hang out together until we got caught. He was the black sheep of his family. His mother's name was Jedda and his father was from Wellington.

Col was gay and he was into bondage. In fact, you could say he was a sucker for punishment. He was certainly no oil painting to look at. He'd represented Australian in boxing at the Gay Olympics and he'd been badly battered about the ring.

"I need your help, Cain," he said. "My baby's done left me."

"What about your wife?"

"She's gone too. I want you to find her for me, Cain."

I'd heard the story a thousand times before. She'd been nagging him for years about him bringing his work home with him and the last straw came when he had a long, drawn-out affair with one of his clients.

"He was an undertaker."

"What's her name?" I asked.

"Candy."

"Sweet name."

He showed me her picture. A face like a half sucked mango and lips that could suck start a Harley Davidson. Go figure it.

"You still love her?" I asked him.

"Yeah," he said. "If I ever see her again I"m going to slap her and throw her on the floor and punch her and beg her to forgive me for everything I've done wrong."

Love's like that. It can be violent and passionate and desperate. It can be brutal and it can be sad. But it never makes sense.

"I'll do what I can," I told him.

"Good on ya, Cain," he said. "Pop round to the Home of Peace later and we'll suck on a few coldies . . ."

•

A bare bulb swung overhead. Two policemen, both wearing shoulder holsters, turned around wearily as Richardson walked in. They looked beaten. There were dark rings under their eyes. " . . . but that's what love is," Cain was saying. "It can be hard and it can be dirty. It can be fast and it can be slow. But it's never easy . . ."

"Please don't feel you have to entertain us."

"What do you make of him?" Richardson said.

"I'm trained to get people to talk," one of the policemen said, "Not to make them stop."

"How long's he been talking?'

"About 10 hours."

"Okay," Richardson said, "I'll take over from here."

•

. . . Anyway, I finally tracked her down through some cabbies I got talking to round the 'Cross. I flashed Candy's photograph. A few of them shook their heads. One of them said he's seen a dog just like it with its leg cocked in MacCleay Street.

But finally I hit the jackpot. One guy remembered giving her a ride out to the airport. She'd told him she was going to Hong Kong.

I decided to follow it up. Beside I needed a new VCR.

I booked the next flight and got to Hong Kong that evening. It was midnight when I cleared customs and immigration. I had in mind getting myself a massage, then to two or three nightclubs, finding a girl, maybe a little gambling, getting drunk, perhaps getting into a fight. Then going back to the hotel with a cat and a roll of masking tape and having a quiet night.

But first I decided to look up an old buddy of mine, Sammy Chong. He was pretty fat for a Chink. More of a Chunk really. He had a shop in Ladder Street selling dead exotic animals. Some people used to look down on him because he was only a taxidermist, but he didn't give a stuff.

Sammy's brother worked in Passport Control at the airport. Next day he had a lead for me. According to her immigration card, Candy's place of residence while in Hong Kong was the Bums, Boobs and Beer Club in Wanchai.

This didn't look good for Col.

I took a cab over to the place that night. The two guys on the door didn't want to let me in because I wasn't wearing a tie. So I borrowed a set of jumper leads from the taxi driver and knotted them round my neck.

"Okay," the doorman said, "you can come in. But don't start anything."

And that was when I first saw Candy in the flesh. She was a dancer, working under the stage name of Mimi La Bonque. She wasn't anything like her photograph, which was from the shoulders up. Okay, so she had a face that could have sunk a thousand ships, but she had a body that could have kept a whole navy fully occupied for an entire three-week shore leave.

It was love at first sight. It was like the cool wind that comes in off the ocean at sunset, and dawn on a deserted beach, and the night Sydney won the 2000 Olympics, and stopped just short of being like a good sneeze. I began to vibrate like a road-sweeper.

She had an unusual act. She'd get up on the stage in her nightwear and tantalisingly peel off her bed socks. Then she'd peel away the paisley mohair dressing gown, take a ball point pen in her vagina and write "wish you were here" on the back of a postcard. A handwriting specialist may have made something of it. Afterwards I brought her a drink and got her to sign an autograph for my nephew . . .

•

"He's a strange one," Richardson said. "I don't know quite what to make of him."

Carstairs, Richardson's chief superintendent, joined him at the one way mirror that overlooked the interrogation room. "Do you think he's telling the truth?"

"I don't know. I don't even care. In fact, I wouldn't mind at all if he'd only leave out the frigging philosophy. And the jokes. The jokes are really starting to wear me down."

". . . she told me she used to work at the sperm bank," Cain was saying, "but she got sacked for drinking on the job . . ."

•

. . . For the first few days Candy and I were inseparable. We got stuck in the lift at her hotel. It was while we were waiting for someone to come and rescue us that Candy told me her story. She said she'd got sick of living with Col. They never had any money. He used to bring home a jar of sheep's eyes every Friday and that would have to see them through the week.

Occasionally she'd try to vary their diet with 'roo meat. But she never got to eat any herself. She's always the one watching for oncoming cars.

One day she saw an advertisement in the local newspaper inviting applications for young women to be sex slaves in triad-run bars in Hong Kong. I think it's a measure of her desperation that she applied.

Anyway, after they got us out of the elevator I took her for a drink. Already I was forgetting about Col, about my job, about my promise to bring her back. Love's like that. It's dirty and it's hard and it makes a man reach deep within his soul, like going through the pockets of a suit you haven't worn for a long time and finding a rock-hard used Kleenex.

"For God's sake," Richardson said, rubbing his red-rimmed eyes with the palm of his hand. "Spare us the frigging philosophy. Just the facts, hein?"

. . . That night we went back to her room and we did things I'd never done before with some sesame oil, a dim sum cart and a pressed duck. Candy was like no other woman I'd ever had before.

She was a bloke.

I guess I wouldn't have minded the deception, or the humiliation. But what really pissed me off was how this bastard had got me to pay for the drinks all night.

So I did what any reasonable, intelligent man would do. I tried to push him out of the window.

That was when these two triads burst in. I recognised them; it was the two doormen from the club where Candy danced. I guess they had come to reclaim their merchandise. I pushed the dim sum cart at the first guy. He couldn't get his dumplings out of the way of the steamer in time and he went down screaming.

I got the other guy with the pressed duck. It was poetry. I've hit a lot of guys with a lot of pressed ducks in lots of different places, but not like this. It was gratuitous violence at its very best. The duck got him in a soft spot and he took on a glazed look.

This business is like that. It's tough and it's brutal and it's uncompromising and you find yourself doing things with pressed ducks ordinary people only dream about.

Afterwards I tied them up and blindfolded them. It's easy to blindfold two Chinese. You just use your shoelaces.

Candy put his arms around my shoulders. "Oh, Cain," he whispered. "I wish you'd change your mind. I feel so safe with you around."

And just about then there was a gunshot and he went down with a bullet hole between the eyes.

And that's the last thing I remember . . .

•

Richardson blinked, and rubbed his eyes. He looked at his watch. Cain had been talking for almost a day and a half.

"So?"

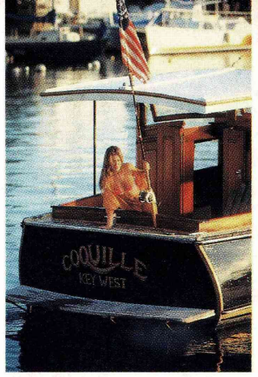
"So?" Cain said.

"So who did it? Who shot Candy and knocked you out and executed the two triads?"

There was a long silence. Cain frowned, drew on his cigarette and blew the smoke in a long stream at the ceiling. "Gee, sorry," he said, finally. "I've absolutely no idea."

Miss March, on the waterfront

AHOY, PLAYMATE



Just think of me as one of the guys," says 21-year-old Playmate Elisa Bridges. Her statement is greeted with scepticism. Look at the evidence.

"No, I'm serious," she insists. "I have some good woman friends, but I prefer the company of men. I love to do guy things. You know, jet-ski, hang out on the beach, shoot some pool, have a few beers at the marina."

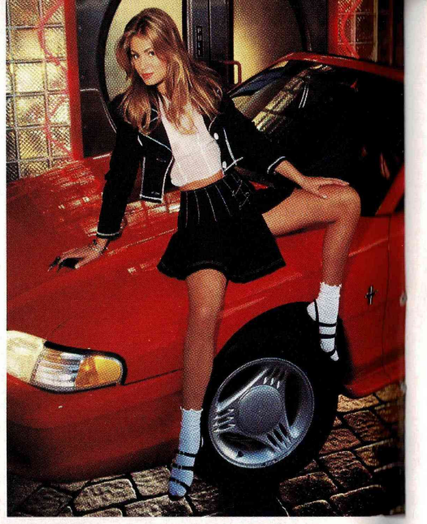
Despite 14 years living near the coast, she never got much of a chance to bask on the sand. So, after leaving high school, she packed her bags and headed for some real beach living. "I have this thing about water," Elisa says. "I love the way it feels on my body. I love the way it glitters in the sun. It's always moving, like something alive. I can't stand to be away from the water."

Elisa knows the pain of separation from experience. Thanks to her globetrotting parents (Dad works as an architect for oil companies), she has spent her share of days in

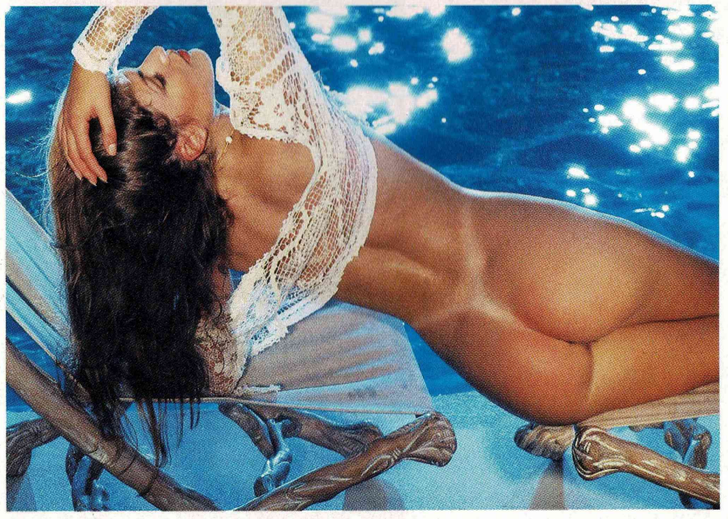
PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD FEGLEY

such places as Yemen and Spain, but never made it to their shorelines. "I treasure my family," she says. "My parents have been married forever. That's the kind of stability I want. I have an older brother and a younger sister, and we're all very close. We laugh like crazy when we're together. When I told my brother I was going to appear in *Playboy* he gave me this stricken look, and said, 'My dream of meeting a Playmate finally comes true, and it turns out to be my sister. Damn!' We care a lot for each other. I think that's why they respect my need for independence."

These days, Elisa's drive for self-sufficiency includes a beach apartment, modelling and acting. She also plans to buy her own boat. "I love the idea of piloting a boat," she says. "In fact, I want to get my captain's licence."



"I love the idea of touring the Bahamas in a cruiser that's small enough for me to handle alone, but big enough to carry close friends," says Elisa. "There's something sensual about water travel. To me, the sound of a boat engine is the sound of freedom. Go where you want, when you want. No schedules, no clocks and no clothes." All hands on deck!



It's true. We drove this wilful beauty all over town in maritime pursuits. First stop was the surf club, where a supervisor handed her an application, then blushed as he informed her certain physical attributes were required. "Hey, I'm in great shape!" Elisa chided. Next stop was for a six-pack – "Don't you love beer on a hot day?" – then it was off to a marina where dockhands broke into spontaneous applause upon her arrival. Elisa just grinned. "I don't think I'll have any trouble finding a crew!"

MISS MARCH
PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH
Elise Bridges

NAME
Elisa Bridges

BUST
85cm (34")

WAIST
55cm (22")

HIPS
85cm (34")

HEIGHT
168cm (5'6")

WEIGHT
48.5kg

DATE OF BIRTH
24/4/73

STAR SIGN
Taurus

TURN-ONS
Men with character, blue eyes, rough hands, hot sand, clean water, cold beer.

TURN-OFFS
Pretenders, snobs, strong come-ons and people afraid to get their hair wet.

ROMANCING MY MAN
Shanghai him aboard my boat along with plenty of food, beer and suntan oil. Captain to the islands and then mate for him.

A PERFECT DAY
Sleep late, sunbathe in the nude, catch fish, pick flowers and swim with wild dolphins.

I CAN'T GET ENOUGH
Italian food, friends and family, twilight beaches and sushi.

AMBITIONS
To find stability and laughter, to captain my own boat, and to star in a romantic comedy with Mel Gibson!

PARTY JOKES

Two attractive roommates, ages 21 and 25, were amazed that their 61-year-old neighbour went out on dates night after night while they sat at home watching TV. One finally asked the older woman how she accounted for her popularity.

"Well, darling, when I was 20, I gave it away. When I was 25, I sold it. And now, at 61," she explained, "I offer rebates."

How many perverts does it take to screw in a light bulb? Just one – but it takes the entire emergency room staff to get it back out.

A couple of lawyers representing opposite parties in a bitter divorce decided to work out their differences on the golf course. On the fourth hole, one shanked his approach shot, hitting his playing partner in the head. The injured man was rushed to the hospital, but was soon pronounced dead.

The attending physician offered his condolences to the other golfer. "I have to ask you a question, though," the medic said. "The head wound was clearly fatal, but we also found a ball lodged in his rectum. Do you have any idea how it got there?"

"Oh," the man sheepishly admitted, "that was my mulligan."

What do kissing and real estate have in common? Location, location, location.

Playboy classic: After a series of stockmarket investments had gone bad, a businessman began looking for ways to reduce his household expenses. He told his wife to cut back on floral arrangements, clothes purchases and long-distance phone calls.

"For God's sake . . . at least you could have told me you were shedding!"

When he took an especially bad beating in the commodities market, he came home in a rage, demanding that she cancel her health club membership, her manicure appointments and her psychiatrist visits. "What's more," he ranted, "if you ever learned to cook, we could get rid of the chef."

"Well, for that matter," the indignant wife retorted, "if you ever learned to fuck, we could get rid of the gardener."

I don't know what you see in him," one starlet said of her friend's producer boyfriend. "He's old, ugly and his mind's in the gutter."

"That's true," the second replied, "but his gutter's on the right street in the wealthiest part of town!"

A young army recruit was using the barracks' urinal when the guy next to him said, "I couldn't help noticing that you were circumcised. Did it hurt?"

"They do it when you're eight days old, so I don't remember any kind of pain," the soldier replied. "But I do know this: I didn't walk for a year."

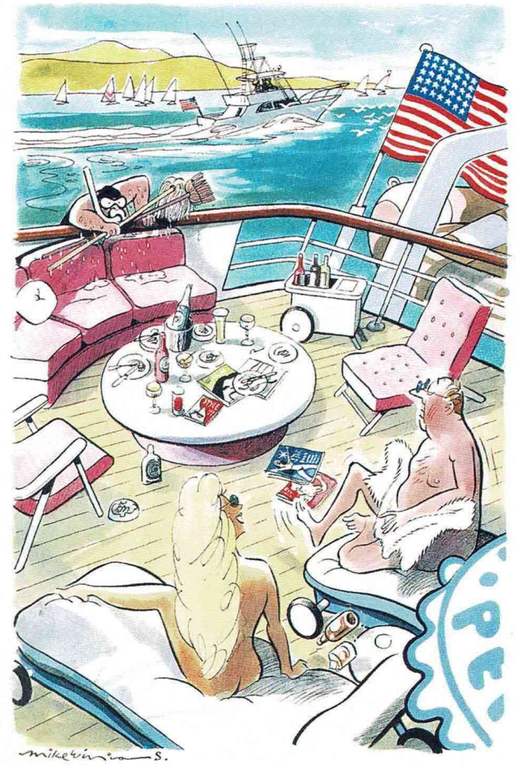
Did you hear about the new Xanax diet? You take four with breakfast and for the rest of the day food just falls out of your mouth.

This month's most frequent submission: Joe's neighbour argued against his seeking a divorce. "You can't split up over something as trivial as a weekend out with the boys," he insisted. "That's stupid."

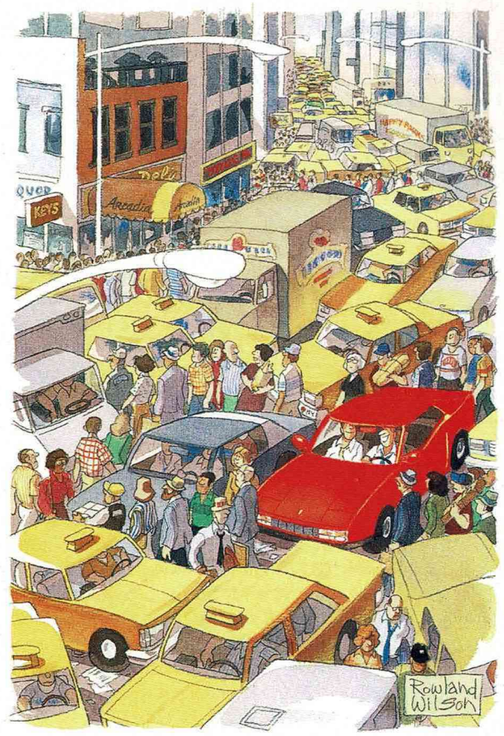
"I don't care what you say, Herb," Joe huffed. "I just don't think she should go."

Heard a good one lately? Send it to the Party Jokes Editor, Australian Playboy, PO Box 746, Darlinghurst 2010. We'll pay $25 for each joke used.

"It was a great affair. I bronzed his briefs."



"Relax, Senator, it's only Mrs Ortiz, our cleaning woman."



"Performance? This baby can do zero to sixty in seven seconds."

"I don't think of it as raising hemlines – I think of it as raising consciousnesses."

THE VIRGIN BILLIONAIRE

Richard Branson is that rarest of Brits – the flamboyant tycoon who can make fortunes and charm an entire country.

It was on the same weekend, strangely enough, when sports utility vehicles dominated the headlines in two different countries. In America, O.J. Simpson made the most famous run of his life in a white Ford Bronco. In the UK, Richard Branson lost control of his Range Rover, which flipped over and skittered across four lanes of traffic, nearly killing his family. In each country, people seemed to be transfixed by the fate of a national hero.

It's easy to understand why Simpson's saga so captivated Americans. But to fully appreciate why Britons went agog over Branson's brush with death, one must be familiar not just with the man but with his ingenious habits of self-promotion.

Richard Branson is the last of a unique British breed: the flamboyant, adventurous, hugely successful tycoon. At 44 years old, he is worth $US1.7 billion and the chairman of a multinational conglomerate – the third largest company in England. He has brought the world a plethora of virgins: Virgin Atlantic Airlines, Virgin Records, Virgin Interactive, Virgin Megastores and, just this year, Virgin cola.

It's not just Branson's success that fascinates the English. It's the fact that he has achieved it with such style – and such nonstop publicity.With hair as long as it was in the '60s and the beard of a troubadour, Branson has enhanced his image with his penchant for death-defying stunts and irrepressible childishness. In trying to cross the Atlantic in a hot-air balloon, he crashed and nearly died. Later, he attempted to cross the Pacific – with the same result. Branson's history is full of spectacular near-misses, all of which have made the front page.

And then there are the pranks. How many other billionaires can add the most notorious April Fools' prank ever pulled in London to their résumés? Branson used strings of blinking lights and an ominous-looking facade to disguise a hot-air balloon as a spaceship. When he piloted the contraption over the centre of town, no fewer than three local police forces were mobilised, the army was called out and citizens panicked. Officials tracked the UFO to the field where it landed. While police, soldiers and the press gaped, a door opened and a midget dressed like the alien in *E.T.* climbed out. Branson, needless to say, was quite pleased with himself.

The UK, in truth, is quite pleased with Branson. The weekend of his car accident, people spoke in hushed tones and paid no attention to O.J.'s arrest in the States. There seemed to be a sigh of relief throughout Britain when news came that Branson and his family were not seriously hurt. This is a country, mind you, that vilifies its politicians and deprecates its pop stars. Yet the entire nation adores this overgrown boy billionaire. One survey revealed that Branson is the third most admired person in Britain, behind only the Pope and Prince Charles. Given recent developments in the royal family, Branson may have moved up a notch.

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His family was still reeling from the crash – his son had a dozen stitches and his wife and daughter were badly shaken – but Branson postponed our appointment for only one day. When I asked the doorman at my hotel for a cab to 11 Holland Park, Branson's home and office, he said, "Tell Mr Branson, 'Good health and we're glad he's okay,'" even though I hadn't mentioned Branson by name. Then, upon hearing only the address, the cab driver added his salutations. "Relieved to hear the old boy pulled through," he said.

The Holland Park mansion is indeed grand. French doors open to the backyard and a gazebo that is nearly swallowed by pink rock roses. Below, there is an underground swimming pool and spa. Up a staircase inside, past an enormous mirror framed in sculpted cherubs, are bedrooms that serve as offices for Branson's three assistants.

When Branson arrived, his hair was swept back, tousled by a windy morning. A slight man, he wore a blue sport coat, light-blue loose-fitting shirt, dark pants and plain brown shoes. He offered a warm handshake before we bolted out of the mansion and into the back seat of a limousine.

Branson managed to chat and simultaneously conduct his business, fielding phone calls, occasionally referring to notes scribbled on his hand like a

By David Sheff

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID LEVINE

virgin billionaire

schoolboy. He also carried a black book full of appointments, names, addresses and phone numbers (for many key business and political leaders in Britain as well as the rest of the world) and, most important, lists of ideas. The notebook was a sorry sight, carefully pieced together and bound in plastic tape. He explained that it, too, had barely survived the accident.

Branson tends to take his near-death experiences in stride. Asked about his latest car crash, he replied, "The third time I was pulled out of the ocean everyone said I was foolish to do such risky things. I told them, 'It's safer than driving on the motorway.' Well, maybe I was wrong." More seriously, he reflected, "It wouldn't have shaken me up so much if my family hadn't been there. That is what scares me – that something could have happened to them."

Branson's wife, Joan Templeman, is used to her husband's foolhardiness. Wearily, she has stood by for many of his stunts: the time he accidentally took off in an ultralight aircraft without the slightest idea how to land it, and the time he tumbled out of control down a ski run and was saved only because his ski pole stuck in a rabbit hole. Mortality even lurks on his paradisiacal private isle, Neckar Island in the Caribbean. Attempting to leap a two metre wide, 18 metre deep gully, he fell short but somehow managed to clutch the opposite side with his fingers, forming a precarious bridge and holding on until a friend was able to save him.

And those are the more ordinary adventures. Branson was pulled out of the ocean after his racing boat was swamped ("British hero rescued from the cruel sea," read the headline of one article). In 1986 he took a similar boat across the Atlantic – and broke a world record. In 1987 he and a friend were the first to cross the Atlantic in a hot-air balloon, only to have a near-fatal landing when they hit Ireland. Tackling the Pacific in 1990 proved as challenging. Attempting a course from Japan to California, he was once again pulled out of the ocean after a nasty crash, this time near Alaska, 3000 kilometres off course. Branson's escapades have been cheered on by his countrymen, if not by his wife. A man on a train outside London told me, "We admire him for his foolhardy stunts. Vicariously, we get the pleasure without having to subject ourselves to such nonsense."

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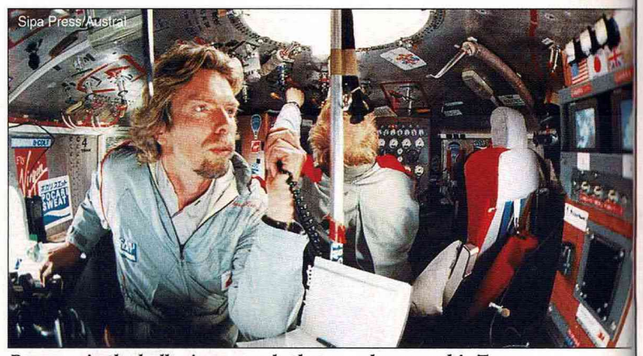
Branson has largely given up on life-threatening exploits. Today, much of his excitement comes from the success of his prized possession – his airline. Virgin Atlantic, with routes between London and Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco and other cities, has worked diligently to set itself apart from the competition. Branson says, "America's airlines are too big. They get worse as they get bigger, and all they want to do is get bigger. They have these sprawling routes, and they have become impersonal and, for the passengers, depressing." He operates Virgin with a different philosophy. "I am convinced that companies should put staff first, customers second and shareholders third – ultimately that's in the best interest of customers and shareholders," he says.



Branson in the ballooning capsule that was home on his Trans-Atlantic crossing from Japan to Canada in 1991.

The airline industry is notoriously competitive, and the British Airline industry is even worse. When Branson entered the business 10 years ago, a David going after Goliath in the person of British Airways, the huge carrier had a virtual lock on the lucrative trans-atlantic market to and from London.

"The third time I was pulled out of the ocean everyone said I was foolish to do such risky things. I told them, 'It's safer than driving on the motorway.'"

British Airways had squashed competitors before Branson, including Laker Airways. However, with its quirky but superior service – notable in upper class, massages, 16 channel TVs, great food and those scarlet uniforms – Virgin began to win an increasing number of BA passengers as well as numerous airline-of-the-year awards. British Airways was not amused. Martyn Gregory reports on the astonishing ways the airline attempted to sink Virgin in *Dirty Tricks: British Airways' Secret War Against Virgin Atlantic.* Apparently, BA systematically – and illegally – accessed Virgin's computer records and, with stolen passenger lists, bribed passengers to switch. Branson filed suit against BA for a number of illegal acts and, after a trial that was closely chronicled in the British press, won in January 1992. BA paid Branson $A1.25 million (£610,000) in damages, $A9.3 million (£4.5 million) in court costs and – most humiliating for the BA directors and most satisfying for Branson – apologised in open court.

Now unfettered, Virgin is growing even faster. The airline flies 1.5 million passengers a year, which includes 22 per cent of all passengers between the UK and New York, less than British Air on that route but more than United or American. It is expanding rapidly, too, as new routes are approved.

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En route to Gatwick, Branson's limo stops at a building near the airport that houses a social club for his employees. There's a full pub with darts, a library, dining room, a gym for aerobics classes and a large field for soccer matches. Milling about are dozens of Virgin hostesses in their smart red uniforms. Close to 20 of these women are celebrating their graduation from the Virgin flight hostess training program, and they're about to receive their wings. Ever the hands-on boss, Branson has delegated this chore to himself.

He chats up the women and makes small talk with their relatives, then disappears for a moment and returns with an armload of champagne. He shakes up a bottle and points it at the carefully made-up women. "I wouldn't do it, would I?" he teases. "Not in your new uniforms –" Then he lets the bubbly fly, spraying everyone within a magnum radius. What's left he pours into glasses, spilling it over the rims, licking his fingers, making certain that everyone gets plenty.

Then it's time for the ceremony. One by one, the women are called up, and Branson gives each of them a peck on the cheek. Well, not a peck exactly. More of a kiss. A long kiss. Then he pins on their wings. Each wing is pinned over the woman's right breast and it takes Branson a suspiciously long time to pin each one. "It's one of the perks of the job," he explains later.

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Branson's wife, Joan, is one of the few people unimpressed by her famous husband. When he was absent – bobbing in the Atlantic, waiting to be saved – while she gave birth to their son, she firmly put a stop to his ballooning. "He can charm anyone and get them to do whatever he wishes – except for Joan," says a longtime friend. "She gives him that look: like, Come off it, Richard."

He met Joan a year after his divorce from his first wife, Kristen Tomassi, a beautiful, blonde American woman whom he had met when she was 19, on holiday in London. The marriage in 1972 lasted three years, a victim of his obsession with building Virgin. Branson was smitten with Joan when he met her, though she was married to someone else. But he was as tenacious with her as he is in business, and within two years they were inseparable. They have been together since, though they didn't marry until 1990. ("We thought we should get married before we became grandparents," he said.) The wedding was true Branson excess: he arrived at the altar hanging from the landing struts of a helicopter.

They spend time between their homes in London and the country and entertain frequently, often for business. Dinner guests have included Margaret Thatcher, when she was prime minister, heads of banks and airlines, and Boy George and Mick Jagger. When he courted Janet Jackson, hoping to sign her to Virgin Records, he and Joan had her up to Oxfordshire, where they went hot-air ballooning. Joan insists he take off up to three months a year to holiday with his family. During that time he dotes on his son and daughter, but the telephone and secretaries are always close at hand.

•

Branson's mother was a former dancer, glider pilot and stewardess – ironic, considering his own current occupation. His father, grandfather and great-grandfather were successful barristers. Richard, however, seemed destined for the world of finance, which became apparent when he was seven and started his first business: a Christmas-tree-turned-bird-breeding business. At 16 he started a magazine for students. During his tenure as editor and publisher, he persuaded writers such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Alice Walker and poet Robert Graves to contribute to the magazine, and he scored interviews with Vanessa Redgrave, R. D. Laing and James Baldwin. On the day Branson dropped out of school to run the magazine, his headmaster said, "Branson, I predict that you will either go to prison or become a millionaire."

Although *Student* was politically radical – cheering on the budding student movement, criticising apartheid, calling for liberalised drug laws and condemning the war in Vietnam – Branson was a shrewd capitalist. To help support the magazine, he sold advertising and started a mail-order record business. He then opened a record store and had to decide between two names: one was Slipped Disks, and the winner was Virgin, selected for no more provocative reasons than he was a novice in business and it sounded good.

Hey, if you're as rich as he is, why not surround yourself with beautiful women?!

After a brief scrape with the law – he spent a night in jail for illegally importing records, paid a stinging penalty and "learned the hard way never to do anything like that again" – Branson worked tirelessly to build Virgin. Within a year there were 15 record shops and several recording studios. He rewarded himself with a Bentley.

When Branson was 21, he had a full-fledged label that released marginally successful records. Then, in 1974, Mike Oldfield's *Tubular Bells*, a 49 minute song on which Oldfield played 22 instruments, became an international best seller. To push the record, Branson dreamed up a spectacular one-time live performance at Queen Elizabeth Hall, with an orchestra of musicians (including the Rolling Stones' Mick Taylor) playing with Oldfield. Oldfield, however, refused to participate; his composition, he insisted, could not be properly performed live. Branson wouldn't give up, and he bribed Oldfield. "All right, Mike. If you do the show you can have a Bentley," he said. Oldfield agreed.

Virgin soared after *Tubular Bells*. Branson pursued new bands, including the wildest, most controversial act anywhere at the time, the Sex Pistols, which had been dropped by two other labels. When Virgin released the band's infamous anti-royalist single, *God Save The Queen*, Branson threw a party that coincided with her majesty's Jubilee celebration. It was held on a hired yacht and was raided by police. "It attracted lots of other bands to the company," Branson says.

Although the Sex Pistols self-destructed, Virgin Records became the largest independent label in the world. Virgin launched many careers, including that of Boy George ("the perfect star – he looked great, sang great, wrote great songs, wanted more than anything to be a star, and was anti-drugs – until he slipped up and nearly killed himself on drugs"). When Phil Collins released his first solo album, he signed with Virgin and later brought along his band, Genesis. Peter Gabriel signed, too, as did the Rolling Stones, Lenny Kravitz, Simple Minds, UB40 and – after the balloon ride – Janet Jackson.

Besides Virgin Records, Branson also created Virgin Interactive, which makes software (such as video game versions of Aladdin, the Lion King, and Robocop versus Terminator), Virgin radio, Virgin film-editing studios, Virgin hotels and clubs and a company that makes blimps. Virgin Megastores, which sell records, video games and movies, have opened in New York and Los Angeles, and there are plans for many more. A relatively small business is Neckar, Branson's private island in the Caribbean, which rents out for $8250 a day. There is also Storm Modelling Agency (he decided against naming it Virgin Models; his colleagues felt it might be pushing the concept a little far). Storm handles Kate Moss, among others.

Besides the Virgin businesses, Branson has started charitable organisations, including a health care centre, a birth control counselling centre and a foundation dedicated to AIDS issues. With the AIDS epidemic, he also entered the condom business, a decision less cynical than it sounds. In Britain, the Durex Rubber Co made and sold almost

(continued on page 104)

Something In The Air

Matt Johnson was meant to go to New Zealand to ski. Instead he found himself a plaything of the gods in a little town where the residents like to throw themselves off the local cliff.

It was windy and pouring rain when we arrived on the mountain. On the next day the wind blew so hard it picked up the full-size trampoline in the playground and blew it onto our rental car. On the third day the wind picked up and the rain got a little heavier.

Three days in a ski lodge with nothing to do but read 1970s *Cleos* and watch NZ TV (the *Cleos* are better) will leave anyone desperately scanning the tourist brochures for an escape. With few options we settled on Taupo, a town about an hour's drive off the mountain.

Taupo is a pretty standard New Zealand town. It's stunningly beautiful: it lies on the edge of an enormous lake filled with trout and bordered by snow-capped mountains. It's incredibly neat and clean – I'm not sure, but littering may still be capital offence there. The people are overwhelmingly polite – after just 10 minutes there rises a strong urge to poke someone in the eye just so they won't smile at you. And like the rest of New Zealand it feels as if someone has dropped the neutron bomb – the buildings are still standing, but there simply aren't enough people for the size of the town. In short, it's an almost perfect place to live – which doesn't really explain why there are more ways to kill yourself within 15 minutes of the centre of Taupo than any other place on Earth. Unless, of course, it does.

Without being anywhere near comprehensive, Taupo offers the world's cheapest tandem skydiving, bungy jumping, jet-boating, whitewater rafting, mountain biking, thermal pools and the chance to hang beneath a helicopter.

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Freud said there are two parts to our personalities: the id and the ego. The id is the self-preserving side of our nature. It tells us what can go wrong and reinforces the risk of our actions. It binds us and keeps us under control. Our ego is much less stressed and spends most of its time telling our id to "Fuck off! Go tidy something while we have some fun."

When the jumpmaster rolled open the door of the Cessna at 9000ft, my id nearly wet itself. My ego just let out a manic scream. If you've never leapt out of a perfectly serviceable aircraft, it's difficult to understand the contradictory mix of enthusiasm, fear, determination and cowardice that arises. One part of your brain is screaming "Yeahhh, let's do it", while the other half is pleading, "For Christ's sake, *don't*!"

MATT FALLS OUT OF A PLANE

Of my two jump partners (they both told me their names but adrenalin seemed to act as a bit of a brain filter for me – things only got through on a need-to-know basis), one had become noticeably tense when we passed through 4000ft, and by 8000 it looked like the only way they were going to get him out of the plane was if they took the floor-mat with him – because he wasn't letting go of it.

Tandem free-fall skydiving lets you experience the acceleration and speed of free-falling without spending thousands of dollars and hours training, but it has another distinct benefit; if the idea of flying suddenly seems far less

Something In The Air

attractive than it did on the ground, the guy at the back just walks you out the door. Which is exactly what happened to him.

"She" (his girlfriend) just gave herself up to movement and stepped out, which left just me and my piggybacking partner in a suddenly very empty aircraft. Strapped as I was, in a very intimate nature to another human being, I nonetheless have never felt so alone in my life.

At 200km/h, the air pressure fills your lungs and makes screaming, or just exhaling, nearly impossible. And, chances are, either out of fear or exhilaration, you'll try to scream – the sensation of speed and freedom is something you cannot obtain sitting in any car or plane.

MATT RIDES IN A BOAT

Jet-boating, put simply, is a hoon. You put a very powerful engine in a boat that's designed to turn very sharply and give the controls to someone who is paid to scare you. Through trees, across barely submerged sandbars, under overhanging banks and basically inches from anything, it's one of the few "scare yourself stupid" activities that you can share with family and friends.

MATT TRIES NOT TO FALL OUT OF A HELICOPTER

By the time you read this Beven Thomas will have a whole new way of scaring his customers – it's called "The Rack". We had to settle for the standard "A helicopter's an amazingly manoeuvrable aircraft. Look, it can do this . . ."

"*Arrrgghhhh!!*"

"And it can do this . . ."

"*Arrrgghhhh!!*"

"And it can fly through this thermal cloud, and, oh gee, isn't the ground close?"

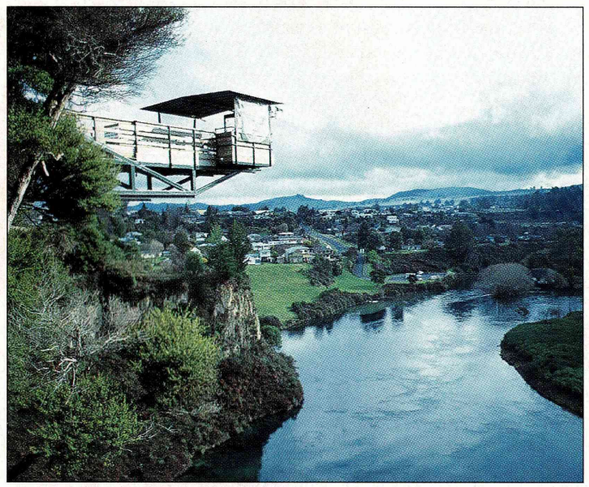
"*Arrrgghhhh!!*"

The helicopter is close to man's greatest mechanical invention and if you haven't been in one then nothing I say can recommend it highly enough. If you have been in one, then try "The Rack". Strapped into a body harness and suspended 20m below the helicopter, you get to "fly" along solo while Beven plays up above. It's the closest thing you'll ever get to being Superman – actually it's so close you probably shouldn't drive afterwards.

MATT THROWS HIMSELF OFF A CLIFF

Four hours after jumping out of a plane at 9000ft, I figured leaping a few hundred feet off a bungy tower would be something of an anticlimax. How wrong.

At 9000ft the ground is pretty much an abstract concept. At a few hundred feet, everything is in focus – and you can see where you're going to bounce if something goes wrong. And although the landing at Taupo is over water, the thought of plummeting into a very cold and very deep-looking river with my ankles tied together was causing more hesitation that I cared to admit. That you jump while staring over the cemetery doesn't help a lot either.



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Standing on the edge of the platform with your toes hanging off the edge, you realise that under normal circumstances you wouldn't stand within five metres of something this sheer, and a reassuring calm that whatever you're doing must be safe washes over, and you start to jump – a split second later, every fibre of your being tells you that you've made a terrible, terrible mistake – but you haven't.

The thrill of bungy is not the fall, but that for once you irrefutably, unquestionably get that repressive, anal-retentive, pessimistic and self-doubting part of your mind to shut up and go and sulk for a while.

MATT TRIES TO UNWIND

Taupo's Law: the more innocuous it looks, the more dangerous it is.

Margarita's is an almost invisible Mexican bar/restaurant above a row of shops in the middle of town. At 6.00pm the tables are full of food, the music is low and beer is flowing smoothly.

At 9.00pm the food is gone, the tables are the dance floor, the music is making the windows rattle and the barman hands you beer with dash of Tequila and Kahlua – a headless Mexican. All the while, the 150kg-plus Maori bouncer is smiling and collecting ring-pulls to make tiny model motorcycles from them. According to Taupo's Law, this guy must be about as dangerous as a tactical nuclear warhead.

At 1.00am you realise this bar sits atop the steepest flight of stairs you've ever seen. Ah, what the hell, it looks dangerous, so how bad can it be?

Let's Talk About SEX

Australian Playboy raises the temperature with its red hot tips to make your sex life sizzle.

There are loads of delicious ways to make love, and if your technique consists of one or two weary old positions, it's time to expand your sexual repertoire. And that's where *Playboy* can help, with the first in a regular series to show you the best positions for hot sex.

Over the next few months we'll explore new erotic possibilities and get your sexual imagination working overtime. You don't have to go for it like you're chasing gold at the sexual Olympics, although we should warn you that some of our positions require a fair amount of dexterity. Sex can be fast and furious, or slow and emotional – it's also the best fun two (or three, or four . . .) people can have! So if you're interested in raising your lust levels to an all new high, read on . . .

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BAMBI

THE MISSIONARY POSITION

In the most common position of all, you position yourself directly over the woman's vagina and deeply penetrate her. What makes or breaks this position is your ability to keep up a steady rhythm without squashing your partner – although if you've done the right thing, ie indulged in an age of delicious foreplay and are just about to come, this won't be a problem.

Who gets what

Because you're gazing into her eyes, it's easy to see which of your moves are turning her on the most. Kissing is easy and so is touching each other's genitals. The disadvantage for you is tired arms: her it's that her clitoris won't get an incredible amount of attention.

THE CAT

Cat is short for something sex therapists call Coital Alignment Technique. Basically it means getting your bits lined up with her bits in the best possible way. It's basically the *Missionary* except you (the man) are much further forward. Her head should be against your chest not your shoulder, and her legs should be either side of yours not wide apart. The idea is for you to rock forward and back, while staying pressed close together.

Who gets what

You get the same pleasure that you normally get from the *Missionary*, but your arms don't get tired. The woman, however, gets this wonderful, constant pressure from your pubic bone on the front of her vagina – which is where she needs it to climax.

THE PROPOSAL

The man kneels on the floor between the woman's legs. She's lying on a raised surface, about the height of a mattress, with her hips resting on the edge so you can enter her easily. She can adjust the depth of penetration by moving closer or further away.

Who gets what

The position makes it easy for you to adjust your approach to the vagina whenever you want – which means you can maintain control and get maximum friction between your penis and the vaginal wall. Watch you don't thrust too wildly or you'll propel her across the bed. *The Proposal* allows full eye-contact and makes it very easy to stimulate each other manually.

THE DEEP MISSIONARY

This technique is another variation on the basic missionary and allows the man total control. You enter the woman straight on, with your penis parallel to her vagina. She brings her legs back until her knees are pulled tightly into her chest and her ankles are over your shoulders. You can help by putting your weight on your hands and pushing forward as far as you can. Your thrusts should be deep and have a rocking rhythm.

Who gets what

As its name suggests, the *Deep Missionary* allows for incredibly deep penetration and, because you're in charge of the pace, you can come whenever you like. Women really like this position because the penis hits the ultra-sensitive back wall of the vagina – an uncharted, hard to reach area.

THE HEAD-TO-TOE

This one's strictly for the genitals – you can't really see or touch each other at all. It's basically a reverse missionary. The woman lies on her back with a pillow under where her back arches. Her legs are wide apart and her knees slightly raised. You lower yourself between her legs, with your head facing towards her feet and your weight on your arms. Once you're lying comfortably you can enter her vagina and slowly build up the pace.

Who gets what

It's awkward, tiring and not very passionate – because you can't see each other – but you can fantasise to your heart's content: pretend she's Sharon Stone, Liz Hayes, whatever. Keep in mind that she'll probably be doing the same!

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PHOTOGRAPH

SIDE-BY-SIDE

It's tricky, but it's worth the trouble. Start off by making love in the *Missionary* position, then wrap your arms around your partner and roll over gently together until you're both lying on your sides. Both of you should move in slow, small thrusts or you'll slip out.

Who gets what

Because you're face-to-face this position is great for talking dirty and kissing. Penetration is quite shallow so you can delay your orgasm for a long time, but the awkwardness of the angle can be a bit painful for the penis. It's not the best position for a woman either, there just isn't enough friction at the front. Best used as a sexy, cuddling position while you gather your strength for something far wilder.

SPOONING

Start by lying on your sides, you behind her. The woman's knees should be drawn towards her chest with the top knee in front of the lower knee – it makes it easier for you to slide in. An easy way to start is for you to lie flat on your back with your lover sitting on your penis, her back facing you. She then stretches back until she's almost lying flat on you. Put your arms around her and gently roll to one side. Thrusting's a bit tricky, and it'll make it much easier for you if your lover tilts her pelvis up a bit.

Who gets what

Wham, bam, thank-you-ma'm it ain't! *Spooning*'s an intimate embrace with maximum body contact and, if you get it right, the opportunity for some deep penetration. Take your time. Be gentle, relaxed and touch and stroke her breasts and vagina – do some sensual exploring.

SPREAD-EAGLE

The woman lies prone (face down) with her face on a pillow and her legs spread wide. You enter from behind bending your legs so your knees are outside her thighs and your ankles inside hers – this way you won't crush her. Make penetration even deeper by slipping a pillow under her hips.

Who gets what

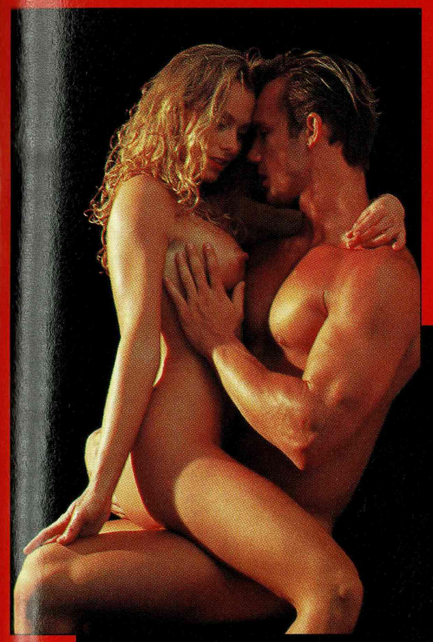
One of the most pleasurable moves, *Spread-Eagle* lets you experience really deep penetration – you might also get off on the dominance of the position. Women get off on the feel of your penis rubbing against the front of the vaginal wall – a super-sensitive spot that doesn't usually get a lot of attention.

THE LOVE SEAT

Sit on the edge of the bed (lounge, chair, whatever's handy) with your feet flat on the ground. Basically your lover sits on you as she would a chair, guiding you into her as she lowers herself. Her feet should be on the floor and her legs outside yours. The female is dominant in the *Love Seat* position, and she sets the tempo by pushing with her hands against your knees to move herself up and down.

Who gets what

The ultimate erotic indulgence – all you need to contribute is an erection! But don't forget, you've got to stoke the fire to keep the flames alive! Keep her passion roaring by caressing her breasts and clitoris.



THE DEEP KNEEL

The woman lies on her back and slips something like a pillow behind her head for comfort. You kneel between her legs while she raises her legs and locks her ankles around your neck. In this position her vagina is in the right place for the most delicious deep penetration. You can also lift her hips slightly, giving you more control over the pace as you thrust into her at a downward angle.

Who gets what

For you: that incredible, full penetration, easy access to her clitoris and breasts plus a great view of your lover's face as she comes. For her: all of the above. The downside is that you may feel a little remote from each other.

THE KNEE-TREMBLER

Hollywood's favourite position, the *Knee-Trembler* is hell on the legs and takes quite a bit of practice. It's also one of the horniest, rawest positions of all. Get your lover to stand with her legs apart and her back against the wall. You just bend your knees and find the right level for entry (you'll need her helping hands for this) – and you also get to do all the work!

Who gets what

You'll have to make do by being turned on by the novelty of this one because the *Knee-Trembler* offers very little control, shallow penetration and not much chance of an orgasm. It's also pretty useless if you're completely different heights! It will, however, build up a mean set of leg muscles!

THE CARRIER

Another great position for short, steamy sex. One way to start off is to have the woman sitting on the edge of a surface. You enter her from a kneeling position while she wraps her legs and arms around you. Now raise yourself slowly whilst holding onto your lover. If you find this awkward, or you've got no room to manoeuvre, start with both of you standing up. She lifts one leg and turns it sideways to help you enter. You then slowly lift her up by putting your arms under her bum, while she crosses her legs behind your back. If you press her up against a wall you'll have more control over your thrusts. You should find the *Carrier* a little more comfortable if you keep your legs slightly bent.

THE SANDWICH

With her lying on top and with her legs inside yours, she has total control so lie back and enjoy. To start, she kneels on top and guides you inside, spreading her thighs and bending her knees to help. The next bit's tricky – from the kneeling position, she has to slowly slide her legs down and inside yours, without letting your penis slip out. You can help by holding her tightly against you around the genital area.

Who gets what

Her legs are inside yours, which makes for a wonderfully tight fit, and the fact that she controls the penetration makes a nice change.

Who gets what

It's a convenient "quickie" position, if only because it requires a fair amount of physical strength and stamina. Like the *Knee-Trembler*, the novelty of the *Carrier* is probably its biggest turn-on.

THE CRAWL

This position is ideal for vigorous, wild, quick sex. The woman on her hands and knees while you kneel behind and enter her. The standing variation is great too. In this position the woman bends forward over a table or something.

Who gets what

This position offers incredibly deep penetration and you can both thrust quite hard against each other. It also allows you to caress her breasts and clitoris.

WOMAN ON TOP

A real woman's favourite. This position allows her total freedom of movement and gives the opportunity for deep, deep penetration. She squats over you, easing herself into a kneeling position, and guides your penis inside. From here almost anything goes, she can either lie down onto the top half of your body until you're face to face, or sit up and make side-to-side or back-and-forth movements. From the sitting position she can also lean back slightly and rotate on your penis. Another variation is for her to face away from you, increasing the depth of penetration. Experiment and tell her what you like.

Who gets what

Because she's in control you can focus on other things like her breasts and clitoris. She can also reach behind and play with your other erogenous bits. A position that gives you a fabulous view of her in full sexual flight.

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PHOTOGRAPI

"This is the deal. If you can give me an orgasm, I'll give you back 100 bucks."

Driving Miss Perry

On freeway and fairway, this lady shows her form.

I hate the city," growls 23-year-old Donna Perry, who at this moment seems less like a mild-mannered beauty than a blonde, supercharged Michael Schumacher as she careens among the freeway lanes in her sporty red Mitsubishi. Leaving the city behind, she's headed home for a golfing expedition – miniature golf, that is. We pull up at the course for a friendly round of putt-putt and a nostalgic return to her roots. "I loved it here," she recalls as we whisk past her childhood home and three of her former schools. "It's more family oriented – like where I live now. I love families." Sure enough, a clan of her own is on the horizon. "People say I got married too young," Donna says of her merger a year and a half ago with Mike, a guitarist in a band called Bad Seed. "But I want to have kids before I'm 26. My folks are real senior citizens. You get along better with your kids if you're younger when you have them." We arrive at the course and Donna strides toward the first hole, her hair tied into a swinging ponytail. Dressed in a grey T-shirt and jeans shorts, she guides us from green to green, revealing the secrets of each hole. "Here's the wishing well," she whispers, as if this one has special meaning. She lines up the ball carefully, gives it a good whack and

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ARNY FREYTAG

"This pictorial is about me saying I'm proud of myself," asserts Donna, who, by remarkable coincidence, is the second in her family to feature in *Playboy*. Her grandmother by marriage was US *Playboy's Shapely Miss Staley* back in the November 1958 issue. "It was not considered the thing to do at the time. But today I can say: here I am. I'm not ashamed. I look good and I'm proud."

Donna's first childhood memory was seeing the Disney movie *Old Yeller*. "I kept saying 'big yellow dog'. Those were my first words." Disney films still play an important role in Donna's life – especially *Aladdin*. She has seen it three times in the theatre and seven times on video. "I wish I could have met Walt Disney. When I watch *Fantasia*, I swear to God – that man must have been on acid. No one in his right mind would think of those things. I mean, elephants that fly?"

then – wait a minute – the ball rolls through the course, past the hole, rounds the edge and comes right back to her. "That's strange," Donna says, tapping the ball again, this time coming closer to her mark. "Next is the ant hill. It's a hard one." She's not kidding; it takes her 10 tries. In the years since she moved from this suburb, Donna has enjoyed a successful career in front of the camera. "People have always told me I should be a model, but at first I didn't succeed. Agencies kept saying I was too tall or too commercial. So I tried and tried again." Eventually, she landed her current agent and now has loads of work, including walk-on-extra parts on *Baywatch*, in *Wayne's World* and on *90210* ("but I got cut out of that one"). Despite her success, Donna is eager to dispel the myth that modelling is all fun and glitz. "It's so nonglamorous," she insists. "It's the hardest thing. Being a secretary is probably much easier. As a model, you have to be perfect all the time. It's really hard on your ego and self-esteem." Finally, we come to the castle, the second-to-last stop on the course. She aims, putts and – yikes – it happens again: the ball shoots through the course and inevitably finds its way back to Donna's feet. Can you blame it? She laughs as she lines it up again, and this time sinks it for a birdie. "I did it!" she cries. "Just call it luck." We prefer to think of it as natural talent, Donna. – D. B. ATCHESON

THE BABES OF MELROSE PLACE

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROBERTO ROCCO

"Melrose Place is a *really* good show!"

So announced Winona Ryder's character in *Reality Bites*, the ultimate "twenty-something" movie for the '90s. Why *Melrose*? Because with its larger-than-life ensemble of designer bitches, sumptuous sluts and gym-built SNAGs it's the ultimate Generation X TV show.

Once a week, *Melrose* addicts gather together the day after the show at watercoolers around the globe to discuss the latest slide into depravity by Sidney (Laura Leighton), the latest lines in high camp bitchery from Amanda (Heather Locklear), and the latest marriage-go-round in the tortured life of Jane Mancini (Josie Bissett). That's not to mention the impending birth of Jo (Daphne Zuniga)'s child – after she's killed the baby's father first, of course – or Alison (Courtney Thorne-Smith) leaving her fiancé at the altar after a sudden flashback recalling a dark past of sexual abuse.

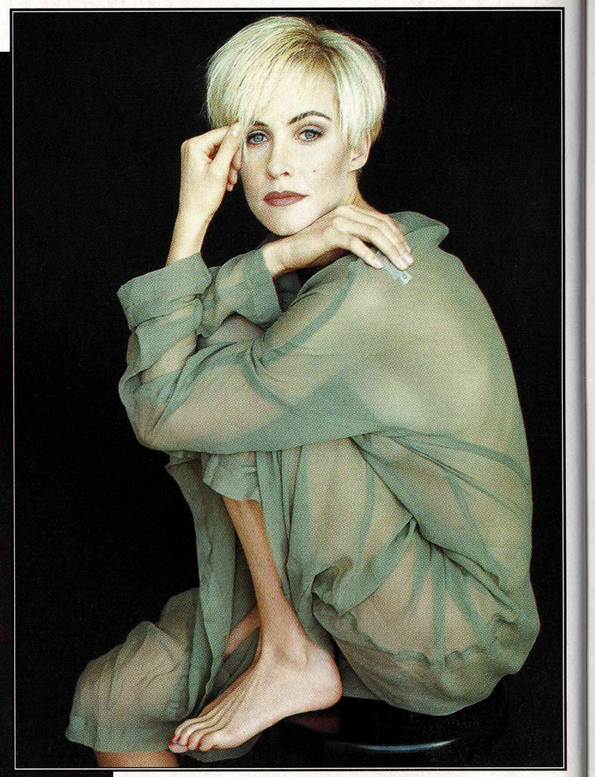
Surprise plots, last minute twists and cliffhangers – you want 'em, *Melrose* has got 'em. And then some!

The show is now in its third season and in a very '90s twist, *Melrose*'s male stars – Grant Show (who plays Jake, the dumb stud, and is also Leighton's current steady), Andrew Shue (Billy, the smart stud), Thomas Calabro (Michael, the studly-but-demonic doctor) and Doug Savant (Matt, the token gay) – play second-fiddle to "the *Melrose* girls" as they have now become known.

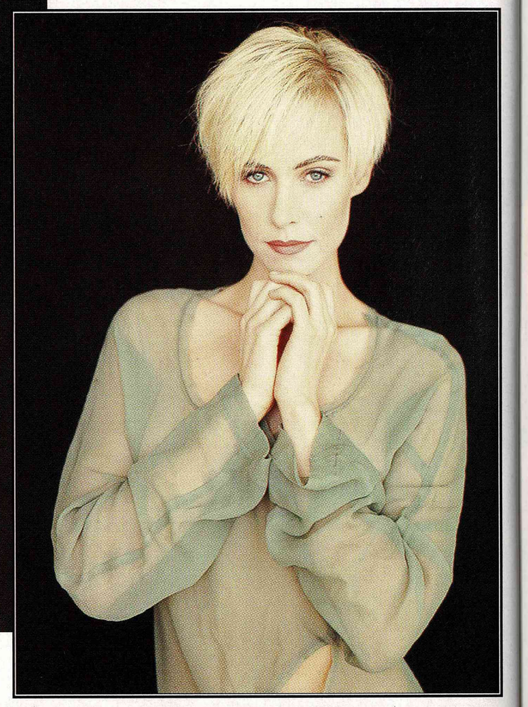
But for the first year of its life in 1992 *Melrose* seemed perilously close to putting up a "for sale" sign. Originally a spin-off from *Beverly Hills, 90210*, it wasn't until ex-*Dynasty* and *T.J. Hooker* star Locklear was brought in to soup up the show and raise the bitchiness to fever-pitch that *Melrose* really started to catch on . . . and steam up.

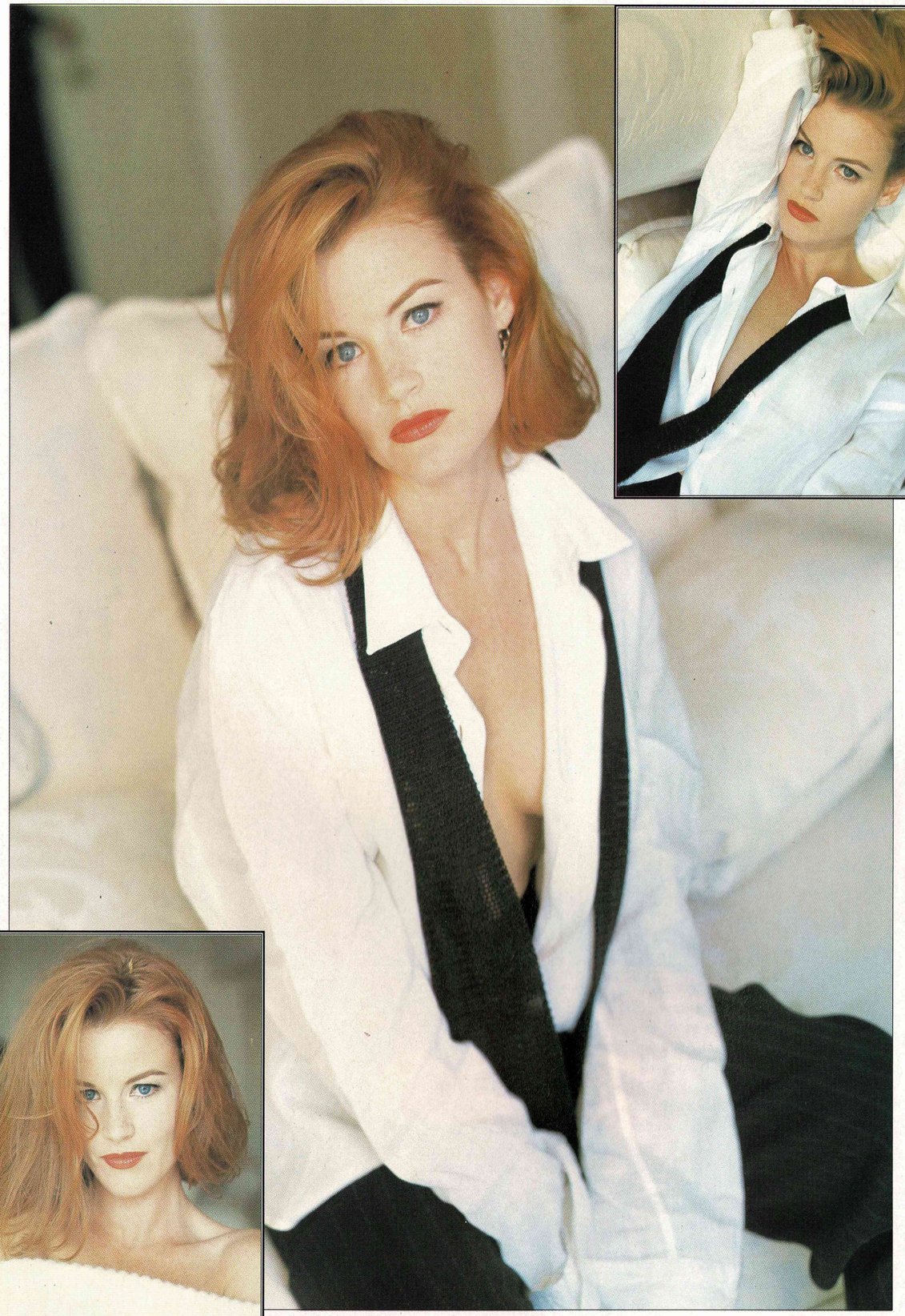
Is it any surprise then that a show with babes as bitchy and bewitching tags itself as "no hotter place"! If only the *Melrose* babes would come round to *our* place once in a while!

– MARC ANDREWS



Josie Bissett (this page and opening spread) may have a tortured life, but she looks good to us. Laura Leighton (right) plays Sidney – whose life ain't so hot either!





PHOTOGRAPH BY STEPHEN SIGGOLOFF

20 QUESTIONS

HEATHER LOCKLEAR

The babe who owns Melrose Place explains the hazards of dating below your station, why women should have all the power, and the unexpected joys of calf exercises.

As Amanda Woodward on the reinvigorated Melrose Place, Heather Locklear, 32, is the perfect Los Angeles landlord. She's blonde, beautiful and lives on the premises. She's nosy and expects the rent on time. On TV shows past, we might simply have called her the bitch. On Melrose Place, Locklear goes bitch one better, and everyone loves her for it. They also love that she has a résumé that includes Dynasty, T.J. Hooker, Melrose Place, assorted TV movies and her exercise video, Heather Locklear Presents: Your Personal Workout, not to mention her marriage to and divorce from Mötley Crüe rocker Tommy Lee. Through it all, Locklear has remained the wholesome party-girl-next-door. Contributing editor ***David Rensin*** *met recently with Locklear in Los Angeles. "Heather loves champagne. I wish I'd known that before I arrived empty-handed."*

1.

PLAYBOY: These days most women in won't take phone calls when they're glued to *Melrose Place*. Explain the show's appeal to women.

LOCKLEAR: They like it because the women hold all the power – which is as it should be – and the men have no balls. So often women are on the other side of that coin. It's also great to see the men take off their shirts for a change. It's great to see the men get beat up a little bit in relationships. We don't want to make it like the guys are just dumb, of course. They're smart: only the women are smarter. Also, the women get to have as much sex as they want and jump from bed to bed. No one's going to give them shit for it. Or at least they won't give Amanda shit for it. Naturally, the actresses are real happy with this arrangement. As for the actors, I don't know about Andrew, but Grant's like, "Give me back my balls, please." He's always fighting it. He goes, "Look, come on! I look like a wimp here. I need some balls." I'm saying, "Yeah, yeah, yeah. Shut up, lie down and stay hard."

2.

PLAYBOY: On *Dynasty*, Sammy Jo was a slut. On *Melrose Place*, Amanda's a slut with an agenda. Is this progress?

LOCKLEAR: It's just intelligence. [*Laughs*] When I got the role I said I wanted Amanda to be an intelligent, aggressive businesswoman in her thirties. I'm past playing twenty-something. They added all the sluttiness later. But I figure as long as I look smart doing it, that's fine. At first, Amanda's role was described as "adding a character for a while", a love interest for Billy. Then they added the little conflict with Alison, who wasn't competitive or a bitch. Actually, she's a whiner. Unlike other shows, *Melrose Place* has no bible mandating what will happen. If a couple of scenes seem to work in dailies, they'll run with it. If the audience picks up on it, they'll run with it. And they'll drop all other story lines to focus on the good one.

3.

PLAYBOY: Describe the story line you would like to see but that the writers and producers would never think of.

LOCKLEAR: I would have Amanda do really offbeat stuff, like going to a humiliation-sex club. Get some tattoos! Rough her up a bit. Something different, weird. I don't know if Amanda would don the gear, but she could watch. We'd see her reaction, her darker side. I'd like to see her say, "I have to finish this meeting, get that advertising stuff over with, so I can get to the club!" She carries the whip in her briefcase. And a black mask. Just a little hard-core.

4.

PLAYBOY: Amanda sleeps with guys below her station. Billy is a good example. Is that something a woman in your position should avoid in real life?

LOCKLEAR: I've definitely done it. It's kind of awkward. Not that one's smarter than the other, there's just a difference in what you've experienced in life. It might work for some people, but never for me or the people I've been with. It doesn't mean that because the guy is a gas station attendant and the woman is an executive, they can't relate. I just need more equality – someone on the same level. [*Smiles*]

My experiences were okay, just not my favourite. I don't like paying for everything. Also, when you've been in a business so long and somebody else is so green and excited about it and everything is new, it's almost like being a teacher. You don't want somebody to be so fascinated that they can't relate to you on a real level. It's not the difference in earning power, though – as long as he doesn't say, "Take me here, take me there". And no autograph requests, either.

HEATHER LOCKLEAR

5.

PLAYBOY: What does producer Aaron Spelling know about what people want to watch? What need in the psyche does he address?

LOCKLEAR: If I knew, I'd be doing it myself.

6.

PLAYBOY: When was the last time you were mistaken for Heather Thomas?

LOCKLEAR: Just recently. A police car pulled up next to me on Santa Monica Boulevard. These two cops waved hello. One of them rolled down the window and said, "He thinks you're Heather Thomas. I say you're Locklear." I go, "Give him a ticket." He goes, "Do you want me to punch him for you?" I said, "Yeah," so he punched him! It never ends. Another example: just after my ex-husband and I started going out, we were having a three-hour phone conversation. Finally, we hung up, but moments later he called back, excited. "Heather! Heather! Heather!" he said. "You're on TV right now!" I thought, I'm not on TV tonight. Then I realised he thought I was Heather Thomas. I said, "Are you watching *The Fall Guy*?" and he said, "Yeah." So, I'm like, "Maybe you don't want to go out with me, because I'm not her." Fabulous. Then I said, "I will forgive you. You're lucky you get to go out with me." If I knew then what I know now . . .

Locklear with Linda Gray (left).

7.

PLAYBOY: If you could have been granted any one of Tommy's tattoos in the divorce settlement, which one would you have picked?

LOCKLEAR: The one that says "Heather" of course. It's on his arm. It's a black rose – with a banner. It's very pretty. Actually, all of his tattoos are pretty, taken one by one.

8.

PLAYBOY: When you were on *T.J. Hooker*, who spent more time looking in the mirror? You, James Darren or William Shatner?

LOCKLEAR: I think they were neck and neck. It wasn't me, believe it or not. [*Laughs*] Remember, I was 21, and at that age you can stay up all night and not wear any makeup and still look good. But I was totally intimidated by William Shatner. Whenever I did scenes with Adrian Zmed, I felt very comfortable. We'd start and then all of a sudden William Shatner would come in. I'd have two lines left and flub them. I don't know why that happened.

9.

PLAYBOY: Pretend a Locklear is the name of a wrestling hold, a car and a medical procedure. Describe each.

LOCKLEAR: [*Laughs*] As a wrestling hold, it would be a leglock around the waist. As a car it would be sleek and smooth and black and long. [*Embarrassed laugh*] And as a medical procedure [*very long pause*], I don't know, but my crotch comes to mind – maybe because I just came from the gynaecologist.

10.

PLAYBOY: There's a bristly tension between Amanda and Alison, a sort of underlying sexual attraction. Under what circumstances would Amanda do something about it?

LOCKLEAR: [*Smiles*] I think it's between Courtney and Heather, but yeah, you could say Amanda and Alison. I think Amanda wouldn't mind following up if she knew she would get a really good account from it.

11.

PLAYBOY: Who is your role model for your rigorous work ethic?

LOCKLEAR: My mom. She's always busy, always working. She worked when we were younger. And she encouraged me. She always said, "Heather, dance on tables. Go do it." I've always remembered that – especially the time I was dancing on tables with no underwear. "But my mother said I could!"

12.

PLAYBOY: Describe the pleasures and horrors of bikini waxing.

LOCKLEAR: Did it this morning! To myself. I do it to all my girlfriends. The pleasure is that it's smooth and beautiful, and perfectly manicured. The horror is the stickiness that you can't get off. I can live without it. Just use a razor.

13.

PLAYBOY: When would you just as soon have a man do it?

LOCKLEAR: I'd like to say all the time. But I know I do a lot of "let's do equal", "let's split", "I can open my own door" stuff. Because I'm an idiot! Because I want to be independent. I want to make sure that I can stand on my own two feet. Well, okay, Heather, you made sure. Now let them pay.

14.

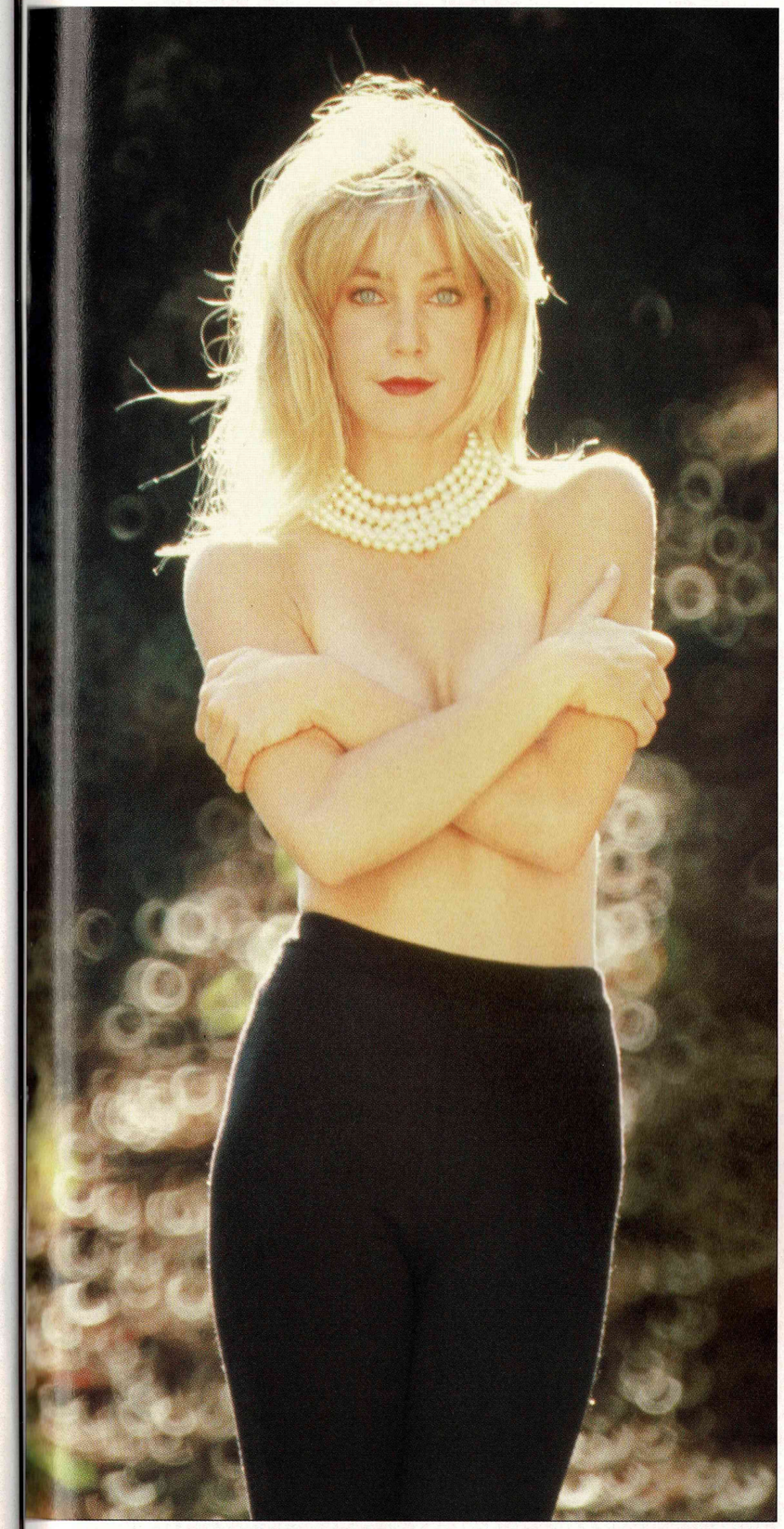
PLAYBOY: You made an exercise video. Ever pull anything while working out?

LOCKLEAR: [*Surprised laugh*] No, but there's this really weird thing with my calf muscles. My calves are just skinny and weak and gross. When I clench them too many times, it starts to feel really funny in a certain place. I have to stop immediately because I don't know what will happen. [*Giggles*] Is that weird or what? I've asked my girlfriends if this happens to them. My trainer says, "There she goes!" And I say, [*out of breath*] "Okay, I have to stop!" I have to hold back. At least when I'm in the gym. [*Laughs*] Another thing that does it is playing Ms Pacman. This is the stupidest thing. If I get really into the game, I go, "Oh, I have to stop!" Maybe you shouldn't use this. That's all I'm going to say about this. But maybe someone will give me a Ms Pacman, champagne, Ms Pacman and calf exercises, and I'm in heaven.

15.

PLAYBOY: How much do you enjoy watching yourself on screen?

LOCKLEAR: I definitely don't. I can't get past the physical parts that I don't like. I shouldn't tell you which because then you'll say, "Yeah, you're right." [*Pauses*] Okay, okay. Well, usually my hair's not combed right. I have a real problem combing my hair, as you can tell right now. My mother says, "Heather, can you please brush your hair before you leave the house?" and I just don't. To me I look better messy, but it's not good when they're trying to make it neat and it stays messy. And, let's see . . . my roots. And the shadows on my nose and sometimes the wrinkles around my eyes.



16.

PLAYBOY: We're certainly not suggesting one, but is there a facelift in your future?

LOCKLEAR: I'd probably do it, except that I saw the procedure in a magazine – Oh my God! Yuck! The skin away from the muscle? You could see the cheek. Oh, God, yuck! That freaked me out. After I saw that, it's just too weird. Scary. Besides, afterward it looks weird. You look like an alien. But who knows? I might be an alien 20 years from now going, "Yeah, I got a good night's sleep!"

17.

PLAYBOY: Describe your favourite pyjamas.

LOCKLEAR: I have little cotton longjohns with feet. Buttons on the front and safety pins holding on half the buttons. There's a seat that pulls down, so I don't have to get cold when I go to the bathroom. By the way, the safety pins are not a fashion statement. I just haven't had the time to take a needle and thread and fix the buttons.

18.

PLAYBOY: What would you like to do for Wayne and Garth to show your appreciation for their Locklear devotion?

LOCKLEAR: I'd get them backstage passes to a Mötley Crüe concert.

19.

PLAYBOY: On *Melrose Place* you collect the rent. What do you collect for real?

LOCKLEAR: Beige lipsticks. Not that I mean to. I have this problem, along with the champagne. Every time I see a certain shade of beige when I'm walking through a department store, it's, "Oh, let me see this! Oh, look at this!" My girlfriend will say, "You have 30 of them at home." Then I'll see another one and I'll have to stop. She'll say, "Would you hurry? We have to go!" Then, "You know what? You have a problem. You have too many beige lipsticks. You have to go to Beige Anonymous."

20.

PLAYBOY: Under what circumstances do you wear red lipstick?

LOCKLEAR: Can't answer that. But if I have red nails and red lipstick, there's only one thing I'm about to do. Calf exercises.

Have You Got Protection?

While Shane Warne can do major psychological damage to any batsman, the West Indies' Curtly Ambrose can break bones. So on the eve of the Test series between Australia and the West Indies, Peter Hook looks at protection – bodily protection.

Until the helmet arrived, it could have been argued that batsmen were more interested in their balls than their brains. Perhaps that's why it took someone like the intellectual England captain, Mike Brearley, to introduce a protective device designed to go further than just protecting a batsman's deep voice.

After watching Lillee and Thomson – and then the West Indian pacemen – cause broken bones and fractured morale, Brearley introduced a skull-cap which he wore under his cap. It looked ugly and provoked cries of "yellow" from some quarters – particularly the older brigade – but his decision back in 1975 went a long way to saving the lives of numerous batsmen and fielders who would have otherwise been carted off the ground on a stretcher.

The critics might have been able to argue that no Test cricketer had ever died in action, but New Zealand tailender Ewan Chatfield came as close to death as possible when hit by a short delivery in 1974-75. Only England physio Bernie Thomas's prompt attention and kiss of life saved him.

Cricketers of the past would say, "but Bradman never had a helmet and was able to withstand Bodyline", but if you look at the statistics, Bradman's average was halved when subjected to the pace of Larwood and Voce bowling leg-theory.

Perhaps the two most vivid of images from that series were that of Australia's captain Bill Woodfull reeling away from the wicket clutching his chest after a Larwood thun-

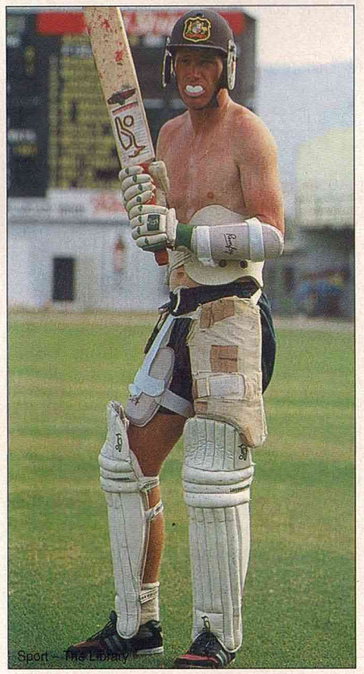
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALLSPORT/APL

have you got protection?

derbolt hit him just above the heart, and wicket-keeper Bertie Oldfield being hit in the head by Larwood.

Oldfield said afterwoods: "How lucky I was! Had it struck me here (fingering his temple a little bit lower) it would have been the end of me. By fortune it hit the thickest part of my cranium."

It was amazing that the "Battle of Adelaide", as the Test became known, didn't claim any lives, and the series did encourage the use of primitive "anti-Bodyline" chest protectors, but despite the danger, most players declined the extra protection, with the Australians' attitude typified by Bill Ponsford. His body was covered in 10 large bruises



Sport – The Library

after scoring 85, but he said defiantly to his teammates "I'd take 10 more if I could get a hundred."

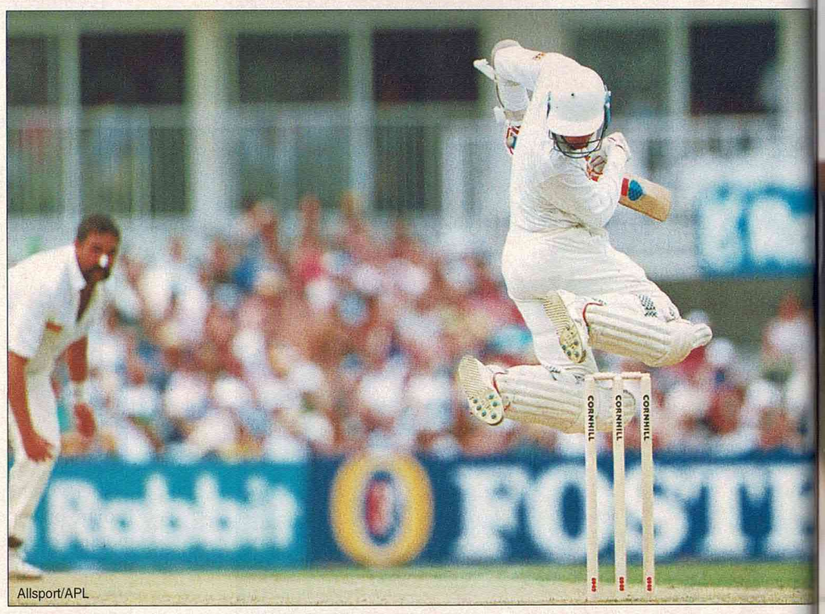
Bradman, however, has been an enthusiastic supporter of the head gear revolution, and the helmet's inventor, Tony Henson of Albion C & D, believes that Bodyline probably would have fizzled out if today's protection had been available to Bradman's team.

"Jardine wouldn't have got the same value of Larwood the way he did," Henson believes. "They would have taken three or four blows and then thought, what's the point of that? and started to bowl at the stumps."

The same thing applied to Allan Border when the West Indies began to attack his chest region. The Australian captain had ignored chest and arm protectors and hadn't bothered with a grille for the helmet, but Geoff Boycott urged him to don the full range of protective gear and to let Ambrose hit him once or twice to show that the intimidation wasn't going to worry him. That way they would have to revert to a more traditional line of attack.

Boycott himself was against the helmet for many years until hit by Tasmanian pace bowler Peter Clough on the 1978-79 tour to Australia. He called up Tony Henson and told him to send a helmet straight away.

"Geoff had said that all you need is two feet to evade the bouncer, and even after being hit by Peter Clough in Adelaide, it was only reluctantly that he asked me to send the helmet," recalls Henson.



Allsport/APL

"Fast footwork is, in fact, much better protection against fast bowling than the helmet," says Boycott. "The fad for wearing reinforced headgear has definitely made batsmen lazy, and it is incredible to see county cricketers ducking and turning the back of their heads to the bowler. No wonder they get hit. Long before helmets were invented good batsmen kept their eyes on the ball till the last split second and then took evasive action, still watching it and still in control until it passed over their shoulder to the keeper or in front of their face."

There is something in what Boycott says. So many batsmen hook without getting inside the ball, so that if they miss or get a top edge they are likely to be hit. Even 41-year-old medium-pace trundler Graham Gooch was able to hit Mark Waugh squarely in the face when attempting a hook during the first Test at Brisbane, and most of the serious injuries in recent years can be put down to poor technique rather than deliberate intimidation by the bowlers.

The West Indies are – naturally – the most frequent causes of injury. Errol Alcott, the Australian physio, will never forget Geoff Lawson's horrendous blow to the jaw during the 1988-89 series in Perth. Lawson had borrowed Craig McDermott's helmet and went out to bat on a fiery WACA wicket without a grille. It was a mistake he quickly regretted, with the ball from Ambrose carving out a huge crater in his jaw, which, Alcott said, didn't return to a normal shape until the blood poured back in.

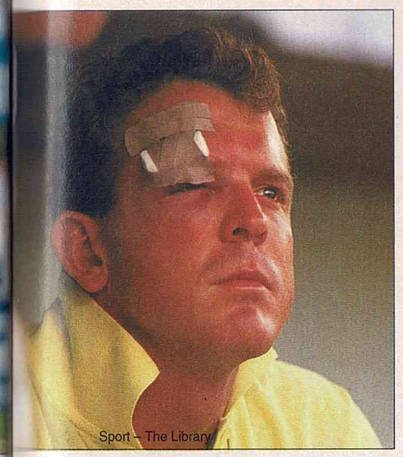
And even the grille didn't prevent McDermott from being injured when hit in the face during Australia's last tour to the West Indies, and he has never been the same since the incident. However, tailenders today are generally far more competent batsmen and this can be linked directly to improved protection. Former England fast bowler Bob Willis didn't have the luxury of a helmet when he faced Thomson and Lillee in 1974-75, and he believed he wasn't the only one scarred by the experience.

"There is no doubt in my mind that fear was a factor in the series," Willis recalls. "Batsmen emerged shaken and bewildered as if they had come out of the trenches after some particularly violent crossfire."

And yet, despite the obvious dangers to tailend batsmen, when Tony Henson's helmets were introduced to replace the ugly crash helmets that players like Dennis Amiss, Ian Davis, Tony Greig and batting great Barry Richards wore in Kerry Packer's World Series competition, they were initially banned by the traditional authorities.

"A lot of the old cricketers were saying 'it wasn't cricket'," says Henson. "Their attitude really disappointed me and I remember one time when a Sydney grade cricketer, Phil O'Sullivan from St George, was hit on the head and told by his doctor that unless he wore head protection he wouldn't be able to play again. He got a helmet, but wasn't allowed to wear it."

Opening page: A tough day at the office for England's Mike Atherton! This spread, from far left: Dean Jones reveals what's bidden under the whites; Atherton (again!) showing that footwork isn't always the answer . . . ; Craig McDermott after copping one against the Windies in 1991; Richie Richardson – that rare breed who plays without a helmet and can play the hook shot!



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A rampaging West Indian attack during the 1978 tour by Bob Simpson's Australians saw the ACB relent, and Henson was able to send two helmets to the bruised and battered side. By the time Packer's WSC and the ACB declared peace, helmets had become *de rigueur* for all but a few batsmen, the most noticeable exceptions being Viv Richards and his protégé, Richie Richardson. Most others decided that safety came well before valour.

It took the death of two schoolboy cricketers on the same day in 1978 in Melbourne to have the Victorian Minister for Sport calling for helmets to be made mandatory for children playing cricket, and although some old timers still snigger when they see a giant of a batsman go out to face a spinner complete with helmet and arm protectors, the fact that Henson has managed to make helmets look fairly similar to a traditional cap has overcome all but the most obstinate of objectors.

More importantly, today's cricketers view protection as a professional necessity. Michael Bevan is regarded as having both a superb eye and excellent footwork, but believes completely in the helmet: "I never wore a helmet until I started playing Shield cricket and then I didn't wear a visor, but I got hit above the eye when I was trying to pull a ball from Wayne Holdsworth in the nets and ever since I've worn a visor. It's not a question of being scared, it's a career thing. I'm a professional cricketer and so it's my duty to really protect myself so I can keep on playing the game."

Errol Alcott is still not completely happy with the helmets, particularly from a comfort point of view, but he – like many other cricketing figures – is more concerned about the fallibility of other protective devices, particularly gloves. Despite being a part of the game from almost the time it was conceived, gloves are still the weakest link in a batsman's protective armoury.

At the beginning of the Australian season, key English batsman Alec Stewart and Zimbabwe's Dave Houghton were sidelined with hand injuries, and while the focus during the West Indies series will be on batsmen weaving out of the way of bouncers, the reality is that the fingers are far more exposed to injury than the head.

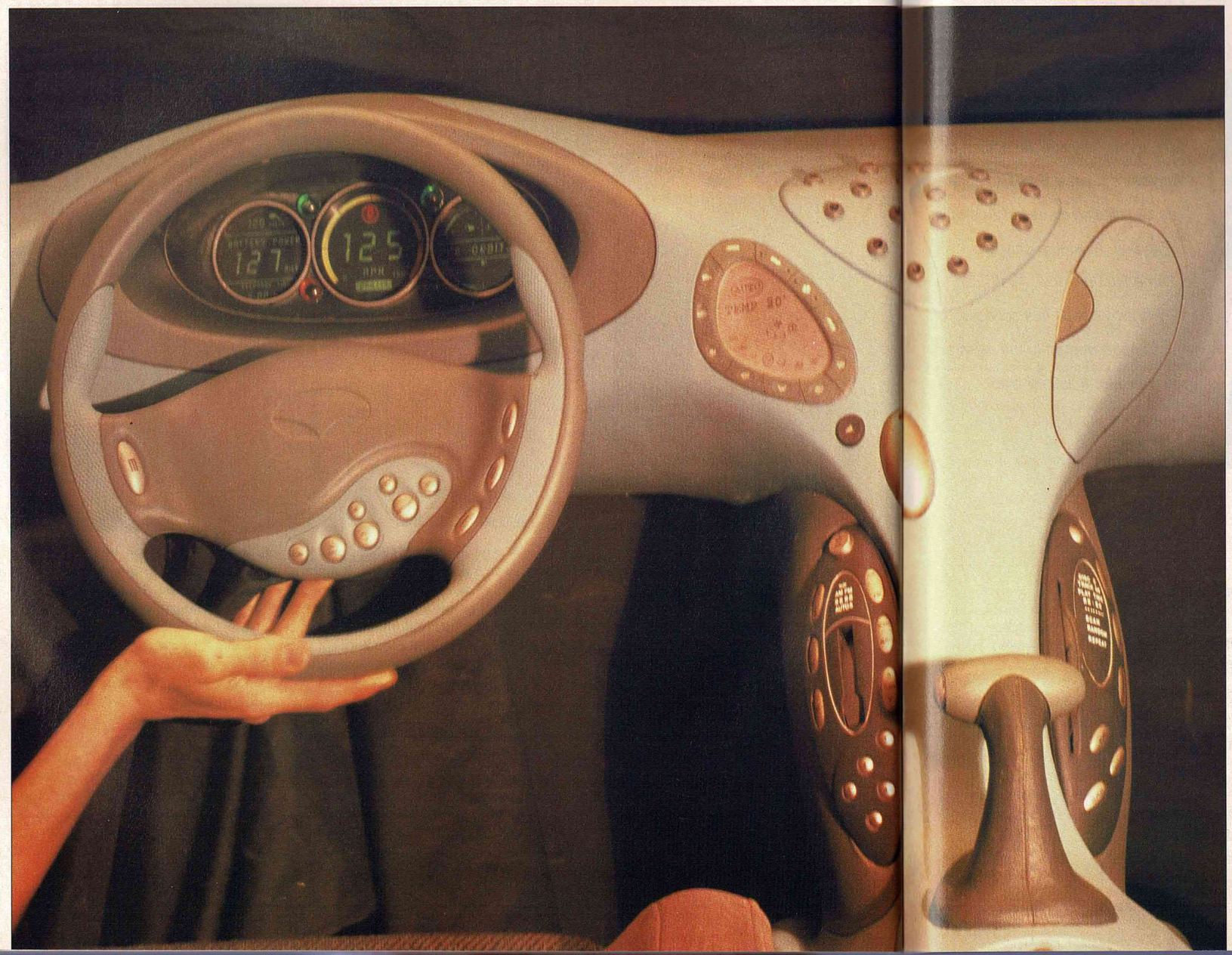
It certainly was for Geoff Boycott: "My biggest frustrations have been broken fingers. Finger injuries are annoying because you expect the padding on the batting glove to protect you, but in fact they are an occupational hazard, particularly so far as openers are concerned, for they face the new ball when the bowlers are fresh and hostile."

Australian physio Errol Alcott is conducting his own research into gloves because while he can be very effective mending muscle strains, there is nothing he can do about broken bones. With Test and one-day cricket now subject to such a hectic itinerary, he believes it is essential for protection to catch up with the overall professionalism of the game. The key is to combine aesthetics with comfort and safety. As Tony Henson says: "They want safety, but they don't want to look like a goose."

No one wants to watch cricketers dressed up like gridiron players, but the Australian batsmen will be thankful that it's only their batting averages and not their lives that are in danger as they face up to Curtly Ambrose and Courtney Walsh over the next few months.

THE YOUNG DESIGNERS

So you want to be a car designer? Motoring Editor Rob Luck tells you how!



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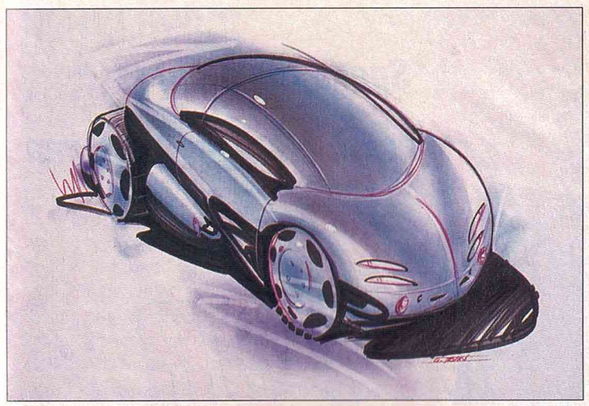

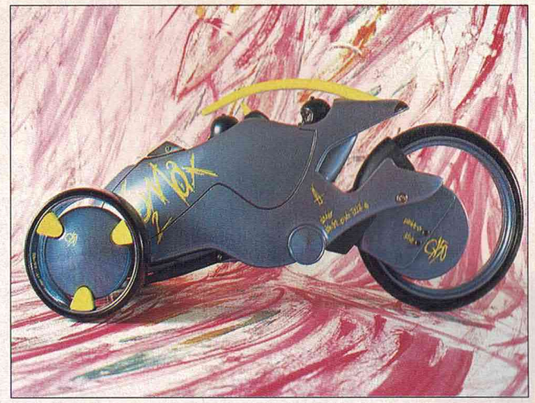

Paris Motor Show, 1994. The Mercedes stand, opening day. More than 40 new cars and concepts are to be unveiled at this exposition, but this is the one they have come to see. When the covers are pulled, the crowd of critics gasps, surges forward, crushing the fence.

In an instant, the Mercedes SLK has become the benchmark design for mid-size sportscars. But the real-world yardstick of success is sales. Here, Mercedes has exceeded all expectations – the first year of production is already sold out despite a projected price of around $110,000.

What isn't so obvious – and Mercedes hasn't rushed to tell anyone – is that this car was designed by an Aussie. Peter Arcadipane.

Peter Arcadipane is one of the quiet achievers of international car design. An Aussie born and bred, he scribbled sketches of cars as soon as he could get control of his first pencil. By aged 10 he was creating the car of the future – and telling anyone who would listen that he was going to be a car designer.

He fought his way into the Ford Australia Design Studios – then the clearing house for local automotive design talent. He quickly learned the tools of the trade, but grew restless with the automotive bureaucracy. This led to a "Very Brave Move" – aged 22 he left and set up his own design studio! What the hell – this was the gung ho '70s!

He worked for the after-market, moonlighted for the manufacturers and created showcars and concepts for this writer, who was building special vehicles at the time.

It wasn't enough. Arcadipane migrated to the Northern Hemisphere, freelancing and contracting for design houses and manufacturers. He made his mark at Citroën as head of the Advanced Vehicle Design Department – recognised as one of the world's leading future-think tanks. He ended up at Mercedes and he's in the history books.

The whole process took less than 20 years. Expect to see more of Mr Arcadipane's work, and expect a higher profile – this is one Aussie expatriate who is sure to be in big demand in the global village that is now the world's auto industry.

In 1970, the Arcadipane story looked more like the impossible dream. Few Aussies were grafted into the local design studios, and none made it into the international design arena. Promotion locally was slow, overseas postings were out of reach. The design career path was, in fact, full of roadblocks. Aussies got ahead only by stealth.

Times have changed. Auto design has become a global village enterprise and Australia has now emerged as the logical centre for this part of the planet – a sort of South-East Asian outpost.

At stake is the exploitation of what is now recognised as the largest car market in the world – Asia and South-East Asia. Look at the facts: Europe is dead, America has hit the wall and Japan has stalled – the only growth markets left in the world are Asian – and these are phenomenal.

In China alone, the market is exploding at the rate of 300 per cent per annum. Forecasters estimate that by the year 2000, the market will have grown from today's one million-plus vehicles to perhaps 30 million. This is bigger than the rest of the world combined! And then there's Korea (North and South), Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam and India.

Left: Yanhong Huang's advanced interior design for the Ford Falcon. Top: From advanced sports/hatch concept sketches (left) to wild two-seater city cars (right), Aussie designers are at the cutting edge.

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THE YOUNG DESIGNERS

Enterprising Aussies are already poised to take advantage of this automotive culture shift – and kick the door of opportunity open for young Australian designers. At Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) the Industrial Design curriculum has recently been expanded to provide several options for budding Australian automotive-design talent – notably a master's degree course in automotive design.

The design campus is the brainchild of Wayne Draper, former chief of design at Nissan Australia and before that a prime mover in the emancipation of Australian design strategies at Ford Australia. Wayne led a team that designed the all-Australian Falcon EA, the basis of today's Falcon, which remains as the only pure local car design on the market.

RMIT's master of design course will produce graduates fully qualified to enter the commercial world of vehicle design – now recognised as one of the high-growth, high-technology industries of both South-East Asia and the world.

Successful applicants may complete the master's degree as a post-graduate addendum to an Industrial Design degree or take the "transport design" option which forms part of a three-year Industrial Design degree.

The Master of Design program is a high-tech hands-on course, in which students will actually complete a series of vehicle design projects including the construction of scale and full-size models. RMIT facilities for the course include their engineering faculty, the RMIT wind-tunnel, advanced computer-aided-design (CAD), and electronic hardware and prototype vehicle construction platforms and bridges.

The course is absolutely world-class and mirrors the best available programs available in the Northern Hemisphere – including the Royal College of Art in London, the Art Centre College of Design (Pasadena, California) and the Art Centre (Europe) in Chateau de Sully, Switzerland.

There is, however, one major difference: the Australian RMIT course is at least affordable – if you call $13,000 per semester for a four-semester, two-year Master's Degree "affordable".

However, this has to be put into global perspective – by comparison, overseas courses are up to four times more expensive. Yet the Australian design campus lacks nothing in terms of equipment, syllabus or tuition. And scholarships are also available for some.

The Master of Design will provide graduates with a fast-track path to the door of the world's great design houses – and the emerging new world design forums in southern California, Japan, South Korea and (soon) other evolving design centres in South-East Asia (including Malaysia, Taiwan and Indonesia).

So the investment is cost-effective – traditional career paths might take five years of work/study just to get a start, and without qualifications, the chances are slim.

There are plenty of opportunities, cost-offsets and kudos to be earned along the way. Local design competitions start at the most fundamental levels yet offer prizes such a free coaching, commercial introductions and hard cash.

Students at the RMIT course are creating some weird and wonderful concepts.

And Peter Arcadipane is just one of the Australian international success stories. Clive Potter is the manager of Exterior Design at Ghia Studios in Turin, Italy; Brian Rossie is chief designer at Ford's Taurus Studio in Dearborn, USA; Peter Hutchinson manages Exterior Design at the Mazda-Ford Studio in Hiroshima, Japan; and John Doughty is Executive Designer – Interiors at Lincoln-Mercury in the USA.

Proof of the quality of Australian training and experience are the large number of overseas designers who have cut their styling teeth locally. None is better known than Tom Mattano, the Mazda styling whiz-kid who created the MX5 and went on to craft the current RX7.

The RMIT Masters Design course has just completed its first year (of a two-year syllabus) so there is no track record of students grafting into industry yet. However, the shorter Transport Design course has already notched some impressive successes after just one full year of operation. Yanhong Huang, a Chinese/Australian student, has secured a design job at Millard Design in Melbourne. Patrick Chia is working as a Senior Lecturer in Transport Design at La Salle University (his chosen career path), and Joe Grima, Jim Stepancic and Greg Irwin have all secured design and modelling positions at Homologated Options, a Melbourne industry and after-market specialist.

Last, but by no means least, Arthur Radziszwski (pronounced Rad-zis-ski) won the prestigious International Design Competition against all world-comers for his 1994 concept of a three-wheel city commuter. All solid indicators of the potential opportunities for successful graduates of this course.

Opportunities are expanding at a colossal rate as the world's motor industry enters a golden new age. Apart from the hard currency of existing automobile designs, new markets (particularly in third world Asian and eastern-European states) are hungry for a new generation of transport modes including "minimalist" transport, mass transit systems, low-energy, alternative energy and hybrid vehicles.

Future vehicle designers will have to grapple with totally new transportation concepts. Urban transport networks that involve satellite navigation, vehicle guidance, taxed-transport, limited access being developed – the European "Prometheus" system incorporates all of these and is scheduled for the year 2000.

New fuel sources including the electric, hydrogen and hybrid fuels will also challenge the lateral thinking of tomorrow's designers, as will advanced electronic systems including drive-by-wire controls (no manual operation of throttle, steering or brake), traction control, and collision avoidance systems.

Add to this a general trend towards modular vehicles, small-vehicle-units (SVU), and compact mass transport (CMT or super-people-movers) and a reduction of the design phase (from concept to showroom) from 50-60 months to 36-40 months and it's going to be a busy time for the designers.

On the glamorous side, the shape of future racecars will start to alter drastically in the next few years (enclosed cockpits and wheels on F1 cars for example). For specialised manufacturers (particularly sportscar builders) and after-market modifiers, the prediction is that they are about to experience an unprecedented boom.

Aussie design talent has already started to shape today's automobiles. Now a new door to world motor vehicle design has opened to young Australians.

THE EXCURSION

Well, we have an hour or so before starting the botanical class.

You can take a walk and enjoy the marvellous air and nature – breathe it in!

SCHOOL BUS

This pure air, it's taking my breath away!

Same here! But we've got to keep an eye on the students

A very vigilant eye . . . immoral brats!

How come those two are slipping away hand in hand?

Where are we going, Paul?

You'll see soon!

Hmmm . . . this is very strange indeed . . .

What beauty! What poetry in this place . . . My God!

Here we are!

Oh...

What a spot. Let's go swimming.

You can . . . J'll watch.

It's not cold . . .

¿J'll stay here...

Paul, aren't you . . .

. . . interested?

They're close, but it's still hard to find them . . .

Tell me, do you want me to be?

Yes

The birds, the greenery of the foliage, fresh air . . .

Mmm

Oh!

Hmm . . . Yes!

J've left it too late. Where are they?

Oh, please!

The natural splendour is filling me with verse . . . my spirit is uplifted

Yes, yes! More . . .

There they are! But . . . they're naked!

Ohh!

Oh! It's getting a bit muddy . . .

Slower . . . slower . . .

Ah!

Oh!

HORACIO ALTUNA© ②

Mmm.
Yes!
Damn, J'll have to cut across the lake to take them by surprise . . . Jt's my only hope.
To hell with this swamp, what a filthy place! And J'm lost . . .
Oh, yes! Keep going . . .
Ah, Nena . . . this feels so good!
Here J come, you degenerates!
Uh!
Oh!
Dirty, stinking mud . . . where on earth am J?
Faster! Faster!
Oh . . .
Now J'm getting close . . . J can hear that little vixen panting . . . J'll see to that!
YES!
There aren't any disgusting bugs and mud like this in the city . . . they should build a road through the middle of this swamp.
AHH!
OHH!
There they are! Oh, shit! Jt looks like J'm too late . . .
HORACIO ALTUNA -©

Phew, just in time . . . they weren't gone long.
Hi!
Hi, guys! How's it going?
J'm too close . . . they'll see me . . .
J'm totally lost in this shit! How totally disgusting!
How do J explain this? J'll drown if J don't reveal myself . . .
Ahh! J'm falling in . . .
J can't take it anymore . . . J need air!
What's that?
Shit! Shit! Shit! Shit!
What's that? . . . A ghost?
Air! Air! Air!
.OH!
AAAHHH!!
ARRH!
OH!
Jesus!

HAMMERING THE HOPS

We're all creatures of habit as a rule: if you like a certain beer, you tend to drink it all the time. But think of the wonders that you're missing from Australia's and the world's breweries! With that in mind we gathered together a panel of testers to try out a few drops. We wanted a bit of variety on the crew so we garnered an Englishman (what do they know about beer!), a man old enough to have been weaned on DA, a couple of lads who regularly knock back a few, and another who is far more of your occasional drinker. Scientific? No. Fun? You'd better bloody believe it! Here's the results – and hopefully a few drinking tips to follow . . .

Coopers Light (Leabrook, South Australia) 2.9% alcohol
As the only light beer in the group – and after the boys had already knocked back a few – it was surprising to hear comments about the powerful flavour. Many commented on the good after-taste and the fact that the more you had, the better it got!

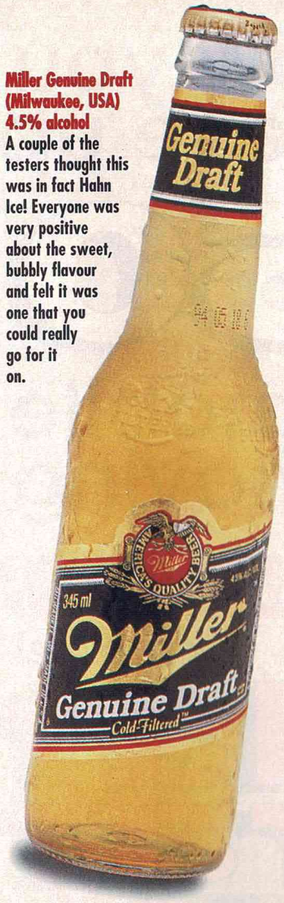
Stones Bitter (Yorkshire, England) 3.9% alcohol
Like many English beers, the crew felt this one was an acquired taste. Not as bubbly as the others – almost flat, said one tester. The not-so-regular beer drinkers gave it the best response – another good "meal" beer.

Stella Artois (Brussels, Belgium) 5.2% alcohol
One of the favourites of the test – "A very tasty little number", "My kinda beer!", "A man's beer" – the strong flavour was very clean and refreshing to the point where a couple of the crew asked for more!

Hahn Ice (Camperdown, NSW) 5.2% alcohol
An interesting response that ranged from some finding the taste quite strong, others a little light on.
Consensus was that it is a fine beer for the more experienced and mature drinker.

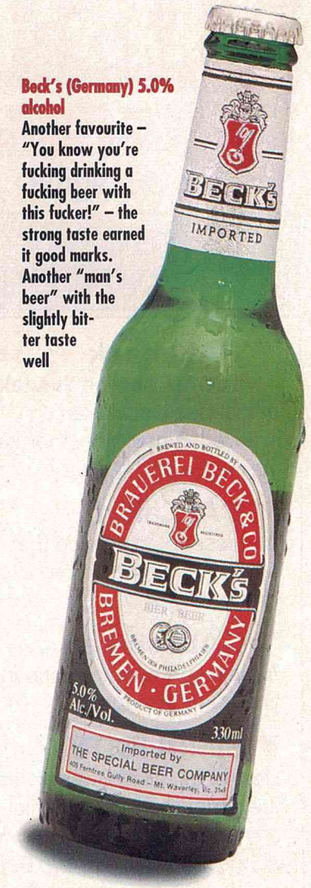
Foster's Lager (Carlton, Victoria) 4.9% alcohol
For a beer that every man and his dog has got stuck into at some stage, the response was predictable: very drinkable, good life, refreshing. Only one tester in the group wasn't keen, finding it a little light on in the taste department.

Redback (Fremantle, Western Australia) 4.7% alcohol
Almost universally, the tasters felt that this beer wasn't one for hammering – more a one or two beer session – because of the bitter and woody taste. However, it did rate well on the "refreshing" scale.



Miller Genuine Draft (Milwaukee, USA) 4.5% alcohol
A couple of the testers thought this was in fact Hahn Ice! Everyone was very positive about the sweet, bubbly flavour and felt it was one that you could really go for it on.

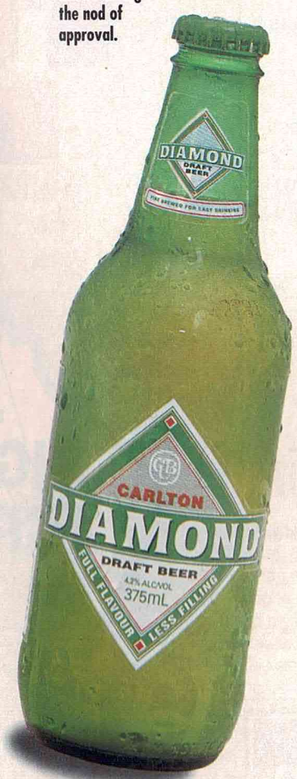
J. Boag's Original Bitter (Launceston, Tasmania) 4.7% alcohol
Bitter by name and certainly bitter by nature. The tasters thought it would be a good beer with a meal rather than by itself. Overall, the dry and bitter taste got the nod of approval.



Beck's (Germany) 5.0% alcohol
Another favourite – "You know you're fucking drinking a fucking beer with this fucker!" – the strong taste earned it good marks. Another "man's beer" with the slightly bitter taste well

Corona Extra (Mexico) 4.6% alcohol
A couple of the crew actually correctly named this one. The watery look was deceiving as most found it very palatable, enjoying the crisp taste. A great choice if you're sitting down with a bowl of chilli.

Cascade Sparkling Pale Ale (Hobart, Tasmania) 5.2% alcohol
Perhaps the sweetest tasting beer in the bunch, Pale Ale was found to be very refreshing and easy to drink. Several comments were also made about how fizzy it was – not a complaint, just an observation.



Carlton Diamond Draft (Carlton, Victoria) 4.2% alcohol
Carlton's latest offering scored well, with all testers commenting on how easy it was to drink. A couple found it a bit too gassy – but they still came back for more!

Tooheys Draught (Lidcombe, NSW) 4.6% alcohol
Our panel's comments were pretty positive. The clear, light colour and mellow but slightly sweet flavour drew a positive response. Easy to drink, prompting one tester to suggest, "This would be fun to get blotto on."

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van damme

(continued from page 25)

classical music, I love beautiful things.

PLAYBOY: Like those Cuban cigars you're smoking?

VAN DAMME: Why does a cigar relax you so much? I love to smoke cigars – when you light up, you have to do it with small puffs, small suction, like when you make love to a woman. You can't do it like an animal. I would never smoke in public because I have an image. If kids see me with a cigar then they think, hey, Van Damme is smoking, it's cool.

PLAYBOY: Speaking of kids, how strict are you as a father?

VAN DAMME: I believe a father has to be strict. You are preparing them for the jungle. It's a miracle to have a kid. People take it for granted. When you have that miracle you've got to cherish and take care, you have to prepare them to be a winner. You have to talk to your children, spend time with them. A father will give more advice to them than a teacher, because he loves them. But you also have to be very careful with your kids – you can fuck them up badly. One word from a father or a mother can give them sequels for the rest of their lives. When I go shopping sometimes I see kids who treat their parents with no respect. They are telling their mother what to do, they throw stuff on the floor. If my son does that to me, he's in deep trouble.

PLAYBOY: Have you ever laid a hand on your son?

VAN DAMME: Yes, once.

PLAYBOY: On his behind?

VAN DAMME: In his face. I told him something, he didn't do it, and he kept on. I was so pissed. He insulted me. Today my son respects me like crazy.

PLAYBOY: Do you feel guilty that you are separated from them?

VAN DAMME: Absolutely. It's a huge problem. Every day I feel about it. I call my son almost every day. When I'm working out on the bicycle I listen to music on a Walkman because I can't think right. My son and daughter are in my head every day.

PLAYBOY: That's some of the controversies about you – except for the one involving your *Universal Soldier* co-star, Dolph Lundgren, who you apparently got into a pushing match with at a screening of *The Player*.

VAN DAMME: That was on purpose. Our movie wasn't ready, so we had to do something to create some controversy at Cannes. I came up with pushing each other on the red carpet where we'd have all the cameras on us. He agreed and it worked. He pushed me, I pushed him back. The bodyguards jumped in and stopped us. Then I walked off the carpet and he stayed there like he was pissed. It was exciting. People wanted to see us fight in the movie. That movie made $135 million over the world. We used the media for that. It was my biggest movie up to *Timecop* and *Street-Fighter*.

PLAYBOY: If *StreetFighter* doesn't do as well as you're expecting, you'll have to find somebody else to push.

VAN DAMME: Yeah, I'll push you. It'll be in all the papers.

PLAYBOY: "You push me, I'll push you." How's that for an epitaph?

VAN DAMME: Better: "Do what you believe is right in life, and if you don't succeed, at least you tried."

PLAYBOY: Where will that wind up? What country do you want to be buried in?

VAN DAMME: I don't want to be buried in the ground, rotting, with all those worms. What I would love is to have my body dropped where you have those big icebergs and the water is so cold and pure, to be eaten by a polar bear or a seal or an otter.

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No matter how kinky you reckon we humans are between the sheets, the animal kingdom tops all. We take a look at some of the more bizarre sexual exploits of the natural world . . .

Tim Robbins
This month's interview is a candid conversation with Hollywood's laid-back superstar about having it all: the looks, the brains, the roles, the clout – and Susan Sarandon! He's a man for whom showbiz was the only way: "I was 12 and I was hooked. I ran spotlight. Swept up. Did box office. Ran the lighting board. But acting was the most fun. Plus, it got the attention of the girls. Not many girls fall in love with spotlight operators."

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He Died With A Felafel In His Hand is a best selling book on the weird and wonderful world of sharing a house with people. Our extract looks at the strange sexual practices that flatmates sometimes bring with them!

At the Crossroads
There is change afoot in the world of motorsport – so we're taking a look at just what the future holds for everything from Formula One to touring cars.

Plus: We preview the footy season, take a ride in a helicopter that ditches in the water and live to tell the tale, and investigate caffeine – with some good news for coffee junkies in the outcome.

virgin billionaire *(cont. from page 61)*

all the condoms that were available. Branson says Durex "had no desire or reason to advertise", but he felt it was imperative to promote condoms – "to make them as common as white bread and as easy to get".

He started a condom company, setting up tens of thousands of vending machines throughout the UK, with all profits going to charity. "We considered calling it Virgin Condoms but decided not to," he says. "We didn't want anyone to think we were doing it for our own purposes." Instead he named it Mates and now has about a third of the market.

Amid these successes, there have been a few occasions when Branson's Midas touch has failed. With David Frost, his attempt to take over ITV, Britain's independent TV network, was stopped. So was his attempt to run the British lottery, despite the fact that he planned to turn over the profits to a health care foundation.

To raise cash along the way, Branson sold some of his smaller companies in the late '80s and early '90s. None paid off as handsomely as the sale of Virgin Records. In that deal he made an unqualified fortune when Thorn-EMI paid about $US1 billion – doubling the previous record held by David Geffen when he sold his company to MCA. Branson reportedly cried when he said goodbye to his staff; even though he remained its president, he would no longer be involved in the day-to-day management. But that deal made Branson one of the world's richest men.

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Driving through London, Branson fielded dozens of other calls, and every person expressed concern about the accident. "We're fine," he assured them, "100 per cent" or "Yeah, survived another one". After pleasantries, he got down to business.

Between calls he waxed philosophic. "I hear this all the time, but since the accident I've thought about it: Why carry on flogging yourself? Retire. Relax. Enjoy all that money.

"But to be in one's early forties in the position I'm in, the possibility of achieving – well, quite a lot. You see, it would be terrible to waste it. I would be very angry with myself when I reached my 80s if I'd taken it easy the second half of my life."

At one point Branson told the driver to cross the Thames because, he said, he wanted me to get the full impact of the sight of his most recent acquisition. The driver aimed the car over Westminster Bridge and made a U-turn by the Abbey. As we again reached the river, Branson pointed to an enormous, beautifully lit building on the opposite shore. "What do you think?" he asked.

The old London County Hall is actually several stately buildings across the Thames from Parliament and the House of Lords. As large as a palace, its magnificent halls were home to the London county government until that government was abolished a few years ago. While many people dreamed about what to do with the then obsolete building, Branson got funding from a Japanese company and bought it.

His plan was ambitious. After a complete renovation, the building will open as a hotel – eventually with 1300 rooms, more than any other in Britain. Downstairs will comprise an entertainment complex with an aquarium, virtual reality amusement park, shops and restaurants. The building is across the street from Waterloo Station, the main station for the Channel Tunnel. When the tunnel's high speed trains begin operating in about a year, they will, as Branson says, "shuttle millions of people every day between London and Paris and the rest of Europe". Branson, in fact, was bidding to win the concession to run the trains. He pledged to operate them as he does his airline, with similar amenities and fun.

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Even though the hotel would not open for more than a year, Branson drafted it into service for his airline's anniversary bash. The interior was dusted off, red carpets were rolled out, tents were put up, cupboards were filled with cases of champagne and wine and a banner, several storeys high, was draped over the roof. It read: TEN YEARS ON TOP.

"If the boss is in a stuffy suit and tie sipping sherry with his cronies in the corner, the rest of the people will have as dreary a time," says Branson. "If nothing else, I want my people to have a good time. It's good business practice; if they are having a good time they'll do a better job for you." He certainly knows how to throw a party.

"Life is a bit unreal," Branson said, "and I still wake up and pinch myself and think it could be a dream." He sipped champagne. "If it is," he continued, "it's a very good dream, see. And I have every intention of enjoying it. It's imperative. Life is fleeting, and we could go at any time. I mean, your car is on the motorway, someone pulls out in front of you. Boom. That's it. So enjoy it now. And I am."

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